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SERMONS IN SYNTAX

OR

STUDIES IN THE HEBREW TEXT

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OR

STUDIES IN THE HEBREW TEXT

A BOOK FOR PREACHERS AND STUDENTS

BY

REV. JOHN ADAMS, B.D.

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AUTHOR OF "SERMONS IN ACCENTS," "THE MINOR
PROPHETS," ETC.

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PREFACE

THE present series of studies has been designed as a second or supplementary volume to the author's former treatise on Hebrew Accentuation. He began with the accents, not because they were of greater interest or value to the Hebrew expositor, but because *historically* the accentuators preceded and prepared the way for the later theorists and grammarians. As a mine of homiletical suggestion, the accentual system cannot compare for a moment with the ever-varying light and shade of Hebrew Syntax. Consequently, if students and preachers have profited in any measure, from the homiletical hints provided in "Sermons in Accents," they may rest assured that in the sphere of Hebrew grammar we enter upon a field of biblical exposition that is far more fruitful and suggestive. We offer them, in addition to a sufficiently accurate account of the Hebrew Tenses and Moods, a second sheaf of expository outlines—persuaded, so rich and varied is this practical side of Hebrew Syntax, that they who deal with the minutiae of the text will never lack sermons.

The field is so extensive and fruitful that, on the basis of these two introductory volumes, the author hopes in the near future to commence an exegetical commentary which will aim at two things — (1) Seek to further the interests of expository preaching, and (2) encourage the divinity student to keep up a knowledge of his Hebrew. Anyone who succeeds in the latter task need experience little difficulty in accomplishing the former. For he who knows anything of the wealth and beauty of the Hebrew tongue must do something to make its treasures known. The wonderful animation of its thought, and the surprising richness of its imagery, will so colour his own thinking and diction that it must become, with the passing years, the warp and woof of his teaching. It only requires to be known to be preached.

NOTE.—To meet the needs of the Hebrew student, a few blank pages have been inserted throughout the volume. Additional examples will constantly be met with in the course of his Hebrew studies; and if he has got into the habit of noting these under their respective sections, the inserted leaves may become, not simply a record of his reading, but a valuable addition to the present text-book.

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CHAPTER I

THE VALUE OF HEBREW STUDY

"THINGS originally spoken in Hebrew," says the grandson of Ben Sirach, "have not the same force in them when they are translated into another tongue; and not only these, but the law itself, and the prophecies, and the rest of the books, have no small difference when they are spoken in their original language."¹ As a general statement this may be accepted by most readers; but when we come to apply it to the training of divinity students, and enquire what is the value of Hebrew study for the regular work of preaching, the voices that claim to speak for the modern pulpit are not so unanimous in their testimony. According to some, a knowledge of Hebrew grammar is not an indispensable requirement; for if, in other respects, the preacher has a good grip of present-day problems, and addresses himself to the needs of his own age, he need never

¹ See "Prologue to the Wisdom of Jesus, the son of Sirach."

1. Study for grasp of main point of your presentation. 2. Not digress.

waste a single serious thought as to whether he knows the Hebrew Alphabet or not. The answer to this is twofold. If a divinity student shirks his duty in the Hebrew class, and does not try to understand the sacred volume which is to be the text-book of his ministry, he *may*, in after years, begin to amend his ways, and apply himself with diligence to some department of the Church's work ; but the chances are that he will do nothing of the kind. Having begun as a slipshod student, he will either end in a respectable, easy-going dependence on the labours of others, or show to the community in which his lot is cast that he has really a good grip of nothing. Besides, the lack of Hebrew study may prove disastrous in another direction. The Church in these days, we are sometimes informed, is pained and bewildered by the utterances of some, who, instead of cultivating a first-hand acquaintance with the text, are content to retail at second or even at third hand the latest speculations of the critics. These men, it is said, know nothing of the reserve or moderation which is ever the hall-mark of sound scholarship ; and if the cause of truth is to be safeguarded from the extravagance of pure *insouciance*, the students of the future must sit down and verify the results for themselves. The Church is not trembling for the Ark of God because of the

2. Can aid to safe-guard the truth.

advent of the Higher Criticism. That can do nothing but good in the hands of competent men. But competence is not always forthcoming. And what we ask, and what the sacred cause of Old Testament study demands, is that our coming teachers be thoroughly versed both in the sifting of the history and in the elucidation of the text.

In fine, the Word of God has nothing to fear from the closest investigation. It challenges our best thought and keenest analysis in the sifting of its problems. The one thing it suffers from is neglect. And therefore, instead of yielding to the temptation of ἀγνοσία, we would rather copy the devotion of one like Ibn Janah, whose daily toil was such, and even his nightly vigils, that he could utter the unaffected avowal that he had "expended twice as much on oil as another on wine." In his eyes, indeed, the study of Hebrew philology was a religious duty; and that was, and ever must be, the deepest spring of all devoted service. Let the Hebrew student apply himself as Janah did to the science of Hebrew grammar and to the exposition of Hebrew thought, and he will yet find, alike in the study of the language, and in the treatment of Biblical Theology, that expository preaching, like his native air, has become the joy and strength of his ministry.

1. THE SIFTING OF THE TEXT

By the "text" we mean the ordinary Masoretic Text. This is at the basis of all true scientific work. "The first duty of the student is not to get *behind* the Masoretic Text, but to get back to the Hebrew text as we have it—to sift its history, weigh its problems, admire its diction, and assimilate its thought, and above all, to use it week by week in the practical work of the ministry."¹ When we wrote these words in 1905, they were speedily verified, as only a great book can verify them, by the appearance of Kittel's Prolegomena to the "Biblia Hebraica" (vol. i., 1905). In order to restore as far as possible the *ipsissima verba* of the Biblical writers, he had decided that it was not necessary to issue a continuous and emended edition of the Hebrew text, but to re-edit, as Baer and Ginsburg had done before, the best edition of the Masoretic Text, with the various readings and authorities for the suggested emendations arranged in convenient footnotes throughout. The Second Bomberg Bible was accepted as the foundation of the new edition, while every variety of Masoretic note or marginal reference was explained in the Prolegomena or in the extended apparatus at the foot of the page.

¹ See "Sermons in Accents," p. 3.

For anyone who has not as yet provided himself with a critical Hebrew text, no better or more reasonable purchase could be recommended than these two handsome volumes edited by Professor Kittel.

This, of course, does not mean that there is not a legitimate field for textual emendation. No one who is tolerably conversant with the facts can entertain that notion for a moment. The Masoretic Text is not immaculate. It has anomalies both in punctuation and in grammatical structure, and where the other criteria demand it, the consonantal text itself, no less than the dual system of vowels and accents, must give place to a more satisfactory reconstruction of the Hebrew original. On the other hand, it contains the broad, massive groundwork of the language—a groundwork which must always be mastered by the youthful tyro before he can hope to advance far in the subsequent studies of the experts. It is not unlike the first few years in the study of engineering. Enamoured with the idea of being an *electrical* engineer, the young apprentice goes to one of the acknowledged veterans of his craft and asks for the benefit of his experience. He is at once directed to the necessity of learning *ordinary* engineering as the indispensable basis for his career ; and he is told quite frankly that he

need never hope to succeed in the line which he has chosen unless he applies himself with devotion to, and is well grounded in, the rudiments which are at the foundation of the whole. In a similar manner, the mastering of the Masoretic Text is the primary task of the Hebrew student; and no one can profitably embark on the sea of conjectural emendation until that initial training is acquired. And in order to secure the observance of this condition, the practical bearing of the subject, not less than its future expediency, ought to be duly impressed upon the student.

Let him turn, for example, to Deut. ix. 3, and note the marvellous accuracy of the Masoretic accentuation. The real point at issue is the difficulty of construing the phrase "a consuming fire." Should it be connected with what precedes, or with what follows? If the student refer to the rendering of the LXX, he will be interested to find that they cut the knot altogether by leaving the phrase as a separate clause. What of the Authorised Version? Evidently with the desire of limiting the appalling figure to the destruction of the ungodly heathen, it followed the LXX in placing a semicolon after "thee," and then reading, "As a consuming fire he shall destroy them, &c." But is this the thought of the immediately succeeding context, that Israel

can afford to think of the devouring fire as limited to the heathen? Not so. "*Not for thy righteousness, or the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go in to possess their land.*" It is for other reasons altogether, as detailed in ver. 5. Instead of presuming on her own righteousness, Israel might rather tremble as she beheld that consuming fire passing over before her; for it would burn in chastisement no less than in destruction, and just because she was a chosen and peculiar people, she might be brought all the more assuredly within the sweep of its purifying energy (*cf.* Amos iii. 2, Heb. xii. 29). This is the thought which the Masoretic accentuation has expressed superbly. It has brought the disputed phrase into connection with Israel after all, though at the same time it weaves the two conceptions together (chastisement and destruction) by bringing the whole of Zaqeph's clause under the dominating influence of Athnach. Hence the R.V. correctly: "Know therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is He which goeth before thee as a consuming fire; He shall destroy them, &c." The corrected punctuation suggests a two-fold division.

1. To the nations, the fire would mean *destruction*, because of *their wickedness*.
2. To Israel, it would mean nothing more than

chastisement, because of Jehovah's faithfulness.

"For the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee, *and that He may establish the word He swore unto thy fathers.*"

2. THE EXPOSITION OF THE THOUGHT

One writer, in reviewing "Sermons in Accents," was quite positive that the author had made St. Paul "misunderstand" Habakkuk in quoting that prophet to the effect that "the just shall live by faith." The passage referred to was the following:—"In truth, we are reading too much about the Bible, and too little *in* it. Not indeed that one has any desire to revive the naïve literalness of the handy concordance plan. That method is dead, and cannot be revived. The term 'faith,' for instance, in Hab. ii. 4 does not mean the same thing as in Gal. iii. 11; and it serves no good purpose to write and preach as if it did" (Pref., p. iv). Then at p. 57 it was added: "The expression אֱמוּנָה is not *faith* but *faithfulness*—a term equivalent to trustworthiness of character or honesty in conduct; and therefore differing little from the cognate words integrity and righteousness. Cf. the marginal reading of the

R.V., 'the just shall live in his *faithfulness*.' " In a word, the prophet thought of "faithfulness" in the sense of moral character or conduct, whereas the Apostle, in using the same Old Testament citation, thought of "faith" as an active principle of life. And yet this is the thing which we are gravely told would be equivalent to ascribing to the Apostle a serious "misunderstanding" of the prophet Habakkuk. But is it so? The answer strikes at the root of what is known as Biblical Theology, and it may not be amiss to vindicate as forcibly as we can the essential character of its method.

One way of dealing with Scripture is what is known as the handy concordance plan. According to it all our knowledge of divine things is to be derived from the Bible. While the knowledge, however, is and must be biblical, it is not so with the mould in which the knowledge is to be cast, or the form in which it is to be expressed. This is to be sought in the wisdom of the schools. We are to begin with a carefully thought-out scheme—a scheme so well balanced and proportioned in all its parts that the various sections fit together like a finely finished piece of machinery. We then go to Scripture for our texts—texts about "God," or "sin," "faith" or "repentance," "death" or "immortality"; and

we fit these into the scheme which we have previously prepared. It is like a man who proposes to build a house. He commences by drawing a fully detailed plan. Then he goes to the quarry for his stones, or to the brickyard for his bricks, and he lays them row upon row, tier above tier, until his house is finished. It matters little which bricks he builds into the first course, or which stones he may reserve for the last. They are all much the same in shape and colour, and therefore, in large measure, may be used indiscriminately. And thus when we go to see the result in any compendium of doctrine compiled in this way, we may find, as in the ordinary marginal references, a passage from the Book of Genesis and a text from the Epistle to the Romans placed side by side. Habakkuk and Galatians are both built into the foundation, while Job and John are assigned an equal place of honour at the capital or copestone. We are not to conclude, however, that this systematic way of treating Scripture is altogether wrong. There are some good points about it. It is clear, well-balanced, and scriptural, and well adapted in every way for didactic purposes; and other things being equal, it has no doubt helped to make us what we in Scotland are, a nation of Systematic theologians, who are able, or are supposed to be

able, to give a reason for the hope that is in us. This is one way of treating the Biblical writings: we call it the method of Systematic Theology.

Alongside of it, however, and in comparatively recent years, a second method has been gradually taking shape; and it ought not to be difficult even for a plain mind to appreciate the difference. It is known as the method of Biblical Theology. It is the mode of treatment which would derive everything from the Bible—not simply the knowledge which is to fill our Christian scheme, but the scheme itself in which the knowledge is to be arranged. The biblical way of conveying truth is not to be likened to the erection of a building. Religion was not built: it *grew*. Instead of going to the schools for our illustrations, we are to go out to nature where Jesus went, and hear Him say, as in Matt. vi. 28, “Consider the lilies of the field how they *grow*.” The principle here is not addition, but development. The acorn becomes a plant, the plant becomes a sapling, and the sapling in turn becomes a tree, until by the process of inward expansion the tree has become what the house built of bricks could never be, a living, fruit-bearing, and organic unity. This is the story of religion as set forth in the biblical records. It began as a tiny rill away up in the Semitic highlands. It increased in volume and

depth as it sped through the Mosaic age and entered the period of the monarchy. It was fed by priesthood and prophecy, psalm and proverb, discipline and deliverance, until in the fulness of the times it flowed a mighty river and poured its waters into the sea of the New Testament Gospel. Or better still, religion at first was a little child. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." He even taught Ephraim to walk (Hos. xi. 3); "but they knew not that I healed them"—"presumably when they fell and hurt themselves."¹ Religion was a mere child, but the child in time became a youth, and the youth in turn became a man, until in the Messianic fulfilment it came to the fulness of its strength in the ideal manhood of the Saviour. In fine, Old Testament religion was given as all things in heaven and earth are given, not as a completed scheme, but as essentially a thing of growth.

3. A FORECAST AND A CONCLUSION

As to which of these two methods is to be accepted as the right one, or whether there may not be an element of truth in both, is one of the questions which the rising generation will ere long be called upon to settle. At the present stage in

¹ Prof. Geo. A. Smith *in loco*.

the controversy one party has always been found to give its preference for the former method. It maintains that, however the wisdom of God may have acted in giving His truth from age to age, we must rest content with the wisdom of man as detailed in the time-honoured creeds of the past. What was good for our fathers ought to be good enough for us; and even though dead bricks are not so interesting as living flowers, still we know where they are when once they have been placed in position, whereas one never knows what may happen next in the case of a thing that *grows*. Another party, represented by the great mass of educated people to-day, is equally convinced that if a choice must be made between the two extremes—between a method which is as stationary as a brick wall, and a system which has all the vitality and spontaneity of a growing flower—then there can be no hesitation in the matter; we must give our preference for the latter method. For

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

But is it necessary to pit the one method against the other, and to make our choice between them? We scarcely think that it is. The Church of the future may find that there is a large element of

truth in both sides, and that the one method no less than the other is required for a due appreciation of the facts. Systematic Theology is not wrong when it aims at being concise and lucid, and seeks to arrange the subject-matter for the interest and instruction of the learner. It is only in error when it ignores the plain principles of growth so fully exemplified in the Sacred Writings. And Biblical Theology is not wrong in emphasising the laws of development so observable in ritual, literature, and doctrine, and in enforcing the canons of language and history in a careful analysis of the text. It is only in error when it refuses to formulate the results of its teaching in a system as concise and lucid as the one it seeks to displace. There must be a golden mean between the two extremes; and it is along this diagonal line that the theology of the future must more and more travel. The coming age must produce a manual of Christian doctrine as clear and consistent as any of those that have gone before, *but with each statement weighed and tested in the light of history and context before it is inserted in the scheme.* In a word, the Systematic must become Biblical, and the Biblical must become Systematic; and then the present controversy between the two schools of thought will have become an anachronism.

Be this as it may, one conclusion which may be tabulated even now is sufficiently obvious. It has reference to the connection between St. Paul and Habakkuk. To ask us to believe, that because the prophet used the term אֱמוּנָה (LXX πίστις) in the sense of trustworthiness of character, the Apostle also must have used the word in a precisely similar way ; or *vice versa*, that because St. Paul employed the expression in the sense of an active principle of life, this, in like manner, must have been the meaning expressed by Habakkuk, is about equal in perverseness. It would mean, not indeed that St. Paul has “misunderstood” Habakkuk, but that we who impale ourselves on the horns of this dilemma are totally incapable of understanding either the Old Testament or the New. Why should a term like πίστις have the same spiritual contents to two thinkers so far apart in time as Paul and Habakkuk ? Had the unveiling of the divine purpose, or the development of the human mind, made no appreciable advance in the interval ? Was it not rather the case that, in this one transcendent particular, the greatest unveiling of the Ages had intervened ? *The Word had become flesh and dwelt among us.* And surely in the light of that divine unveiling, to ask us to believe

that the term "faith" acquired no newer or richer meaning for the Apostle of the Gentiles, is from the standpoint of Biblical Theology totally unthinkable. Neither the study of the language nor the exposition of the thought necessitates any such conclusion. Despite the naïve literalness of the handy concordance plan, each passage must be weighed and tested in the light of context and history. And when this is done with sobriety and judgment, we can only leave our former statement as originally written, that the term "faith" in Habakkuk does not mean the same thing as in the Epistle to the Galatians, and it serves no good purpose to write and preach as if it did.

But leaving at this point the theological aspect of the subject, we propose in the following chapters to investigate the text grammatically. And corresponding to the sketch of the accentuators in Chapter II. of "*Sermons in Accents*," we shall begin with a short historical outline of the Hebrew Grammarians.

1. Reasons for Studying Hebrew

- a. A Discipline for future Scholars -
- b. Safeguard eternal truths of Scripture against the Modern Critical School -
- c. Strength to his ministry -

2. Aids

- a. Sifting of the Text
- b. Exposition of the Thought
- c. Give a Forecast & a Conclusion.
Progressive Revelation.

CHAPTER II

THE GRAMMARIANS

IN dealing with the history of the Text, we have already sketched the labours of the Sopherim, Masoretes, and Punctuators.¹ The Sopherim revised and finally settled the consonantal text. The Masoretes introduced and perfected the dual system of punctuation. The Punctuators, who inherited and perpetuated the services of both, became the producers of all the extant Hebrew MSS., and thus provided the materials for a subsequent systematic study of the language. There was no conscious intention of investigating phonetic and syntactical law as such; but by conserving the correct reading of the traditional orthography, and furnishing not a few linguistic categories which were incorporated later into the grammatical terminology, the Masorah enabled the new generation to determine the laws of Hebrew etymology, and by its knowledge of Hebrew idiom became the cradle proper of

¹ "Sermons in Accents," Chap. II.

scientific Hebrew grammar. Even the term "dikduk," which came to be applied to the grammatical investigation of the language, was probably in use among the Masoretes at a very early date. From the root קד, to crush or pulverise (*cf.* Ex. xxxii. 20), it would signify in their hands the careful reading of the text, with all the subtleties which were handed down regarding it. In later times, when the study of Hebrew grammar grew out of the Masoretic rules for reading, the expression, thus understood, would offer itself as a suitable designation for the new science. Hence Hebrew philology and Hebrew lexicography were essentially products of the Jewish soil: the Talmudists prepared the way for the later theorists and grammarians.

1. THE JEWISH GRAMMARIANS

That the beginnings of Hebrew grammar are rightly sought in the Masorah may be illustrated by two renowned scholars of the tenth century—*R. ben Asher*, the great Masorete of Tiberias, and his contemporary *Saadia*, the noble gaon (or head of the academy) of Sūrā, near Babylon (d. 942).

All are agreed that Ben Asher was deeply versed in vocalic and accentual lore, and was in

reality the connecting link between the Masoretes and the grammarians. He not only fixed the pronunciation of the text, as we now have it, but dealt also with the twofold classification of consonants and vowels which had been handed down by his predecessors as a distinct Masoretic result. In this great Palestinian Rabbi, therefore, "Hebrew grammar appears, as it were, in its shell, a witness to the fact that grammar proceeded from the Masorah."¹ The gaon Saadia, on the other hand, was more independent in his treatment of Biblical Hebrew. He wrote in Arabic, and under the influence of Arabic philology, but sought to explain, in the light of that excellent model, the grammatical inflection of his own sacred tongue. In particular, he introduced the distinction between root and functional letters, emphasising the *root* as the essential part of the word, and illustrating the grammatical *functions* of the other elements by the help of regularly formed paradigms. These were the first paradigms ever used in Hebrew grammar, and Saadia employed as the paradigm-word the verb שָׁמַע.

The influence of Arabic, as seen in this Babylonian gaon, is one of the most important elements in the subsequent study of the language. It is

¹ W. Bacher, in "Jewish Encyclopædia."

found, however, in all its richness, not in Sūrā, but among the Arabic-speaking Jews of Spain. Witness such outstanding examples as *Ḥayyuj*, discoverer of the system of triliteral roots; *Ibn Janah*, the greatest Hebrew philologist of the Middle Ages; *Ibn Ezra*, the wandering poet and thinker, who was the last of the great men who formed the pride of Spanish Judaism; and not the least, *Joseph*, and *David Kimḥi* (father and son), who had immigrated from Spain into Southern France, but whose works became the chief fountain of Jewish learning for the Christian Hebraists of the sixteenth century. We may briefly describe the services attributed to each.

Ḥayyuj was born in Fez, Morocco, about 950; but went to Cordova, in Spain, at an early age, and there appears to have remained until his death. Before his time considerable confusion seems to have prevailed on the subject of "weak" verbs. His own teacher, Menahem ben Saruk, was of opinion that Hebrew stems contained three letters, two letters, and one letter respectively—the vowel letters being entirely overlooked as component elements in the verbal form. *Ḥayyuj*, however, who applied the theories of the Arabic grammarians to the elucidation of Hebrew grammar, announced the doctrine that all Hebrew stems are *triliteral*. They consist in every in-

stance of three letters; but if one of these happens to be a vowel letter, it may be regarded as concealed in diverse ways in the various verbal forms. There can be no question that the teaching of Hayyuj on this and kindred topics exerted an immense influence on succeeding generations; and in view of the treatise on which his fame chiefly rests—"The Book of Verbs containing Weak Letters"—he is fully entitled to the proud designation, "the father of scientific Hebrew grammar."¹

Ibn Janah addressed himself to the task of completing what Hayyuj had begun. Born at Cordova about 985, he adopted medicine as his profession, but speedily discovered, like his renowned predecessor, that the main attraction of his life was the science of Hebrew grammar and the exposition of Hebrew thought. In his eyes, indeed, as remarked above, the study of Hebrew philology was a religious duty; and he allowed the same high principle to regulate and determine his attitude towards others. If he criticised and sought to rectify the observations of Hayyuj on the subject of weak verbs, he never forgot the respect due to the man who had first shown him the way. "If we can criticise him," he remarks in the Introduction to his first book, "we

¹ Caspar Levias, in "*Jewish Encyclopædia*."

owe our ability to do so to his teaching, and to the good we have received from his writings." The devotion with which he applied himself to his own Hebrew studies was of the same high character; and it is not surprising that his chief work, "The Book of Minute Research" (*Al-Tankit*, the Arabic equivalent for "dikduk"), is described as "a rich mine of information on Biblical syntax, rhetoric, and exegesis." It was the first complete exposition of the Hebrew vocabulary and grammar. The author died at Saragossa in the first half of the eleventh century.

Equally interesting and instructive was the chequered career of Rabbi Ibn Ezra. Born at Toledo in 1092, he afterwards resided in Cordova, but set out from his native land in 1140, and for the long period of twenty-seven years lived the unsettled life of a wanderer. Becoming an exile, in the first instance, in the hope of bringing back to the true faith his son Isaac, who had become a pervert to Islam, he found that his family grief was divinely overruled in the wider interests of mediæval Judaism. He was able to bring to the Jews of France, Italy, and even London full and accurate knowledge of what was being done in Arabic-Spain, both in the sphere of grammar and of biblical exegesis. His own work may have been based largely on his Arabic sources, but as

the translator of the work of Hayyuj into pure Hebrew, and the author of copious grammatical notes in his different exegetical commentaries, he was no unworthy member of the Arabic-Spanish school which prepared the way for the most serviceable of all the Jewish Hebrew grammars—the “Miklol” of David Kimḥi.

Born at Narbonne about 1160, the latter was the younger son of Joseph Kimḥi, who had already marked an epoch in the study of Hebrew grammar by introducing the new vowel system, derived from Latin, according to which the vowel sounds are divided into five long and five short ones—a division which is quite different from the traditional system of the Masoretes. David did not inherit his father’s originality, but he possessed in a rare degree the genius for digesting and assimilating the work of his predecessors; and by adopting the paradigmatic method of his brother, Moses, he became, both for Jews and Christians, the greatest Jewish grammarian and lexicographer for the next 650 years. His “Miklol” (מכלול, perfection) and his numerous commentaries exercised an enormous influence on the later Middle Ages. “Our own Authorised Version, for example, bears the stamp of Kimḥi on every page.”¹ Apart from his influence, indeed, the

¹ Robertson Smith, in “Ency. Brit.”

cause of Jewish learning would never have flourished as it did. It would have been strangled on the Procrustian bed of Talmudical orthodoxy. But, inspired by his learning and example, a succession of sound scholars continued to carry forward the torch of a revived Hebrew study until, in the hands of Elias Levita and his contemporaries, it was handed over in the sixteenth century to the custody of the Christian universities.

2. THE CHRISTIAN GRAMMARIANS

With the advent of the Reformation a great change was naturally effected in the history of Hebrew grammar. The study of the holy language had now become a part of Christian scholarship; and though there were serious obstacles in the way of placing a *third* learned tongue beside Latin and Greek in the curriculum, the ultimate establishment of a trilingual course in all the European universities was simply a question of time. It was the very genius of the new movement to demand a return to the study of Holy Scripture, and the importance of Hebrew as an element in that discipline could no longer be evaded. And yet, just as in the beginnings of Hebrew grammar in the Masorah, so now, in the earliest efforts of Christian Hebraists at the

Reformation, there was, for a time at least, a close adherence to Jewish tradition, and a simple, though scholarly, reproduction of Jewish works.

Corresponding to Ben Asher, for instance, and his contemporary, Saadia, allusion may be made to two celebrated teachers of the sixteenth century—*Elias Levita* (1469-1549), the broad-minded Rabbi who taught at Padua, &c., and *Johann Reuchlin* (1455-1522), the great German humanist, who was “the father of Hebrew philology among the Christians.”¹ The former, who was the first to question the antiquity of the vowel points, and was in consequence accused of heresy, composed a commentary to Moses Kimḥi’s brief grammar, which through him became one of the most popular manuals for the regular work of the classroom. The “*Rudimenta Hebraica*” of the latter, published in 1506, performed a somewhat similar service for the “*Miklol*” of David Kimḥi. Like its prototype, it consisted of two parts—a grammar and a lexicon—and notwithstanding its Latinised terminology, was admirably adapted to introduce Christians to the literary treasures of the Hebrew tongue.

In the larger air of humanism, however, a more independent treatment of the language speedily

¹ Gesenius.

arose. Beginning with a quickened interest in classical literature as such, it instinctively felt the importance of the ancient versions for the elucidation of Biblical Hebrew. And despite the learned efforts of the *Buxtorf* family (seventeenth century), who sought to rehabilitate the integrity of the Masoretic tradition, and even the antiquity of the vowel points, the comparative method of studying the language continued to advance in favour until in the hands of *Albert Schultens* (eighteenth century) it gave a new shape to the study of Hebrew grammar by bringing it once more into comparison with the kindred languages, especially Arabic. Not that the laws of comparative philology were already known in the Dutch school of which Schultens was the acknowledged leader, but in his epoch-making "*Institutiones*," and notably in his dissertation on "*The Use of Arabic in the Interpretation of Scripture*," he vindicated the value of the comparative method against those who regarded Hebrew as a sacred tongue, with which comparative philology has little or nothing to do. The line thus indicated was assiduously followed by others, particularly by the greatest of French orientalists, *Silvestre de Sacy* (1758-1838). Alike for the study of pure Hebrew, and as preparing the way for a scientific treatment of comparative Semitic grammar, the

value of Arabic was conclusively settled by this comprehensive scholar, who had chosen the whole Oriental world as his domain. He placed Semitic grammar on a broad and thoroughly scientific basis, and thus inaugurated the new method of studying language *as an organism* which, adopted by most modern investigators, has set the grammatical structure of Hebrew in a fresh light.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, for instance, we have the two German scholars, *Wilhelm Gesenius* (1785-1842) and *Heinrich Ewald* (1803-1875), the one excelling in method and lucidity of expression, the other in the power of grouping the broader features of language, and of recognising the principles which underlie and explain its phenomena. And since the latter, especially, has mapped out the ground over which all subsequent investigation must be conducted, we may fitly close our present historical sketch by adding some appreciation of these two scholars. From the standpoint of the learner, the chaste simplicity of Gesenius' grammar left nothing to be desired; but for an independent study of the language, philosophic in its grasp and creative in its fertility of ideas, the advanced student must have recourse to the epoch-making "Syntax" of Ewald's *Lehrbuch*. Ewald's interest in Semitic

grammar was very early evoked. As a youthful graduate of nineteen, he devoted himself with enthusiasm to the study of Arabic and Sanskrit, issuing in 1825 a small treatise on Arabic metres, the results of which were incorporated later into his Arabic grammar; and in 1827 an equally interesting essay on some of the older Sanskrit metres, an indication that the young scholar had already chosen as his domain the whole Oriental world. In the same year he became an aspirant to the Chair of Eichhorn at Göttingen, and this led him into the special field of Hebrew grammar. The older scholar, Gesenius, had stronger claims than he both in philology and lexicography; but it is not too much to say that with his *Kritische Grammatik* in his hand the young orientalist and theological tutor went forward and won his professorship. It was at once seen that while Gesenius might still retain his place as the master of Hebrew lexicography, Ewald by his originality and penetration had introduced a new era in the study of Hebrew grammar. In particular, he propagated that sound doctrine of the so-called *Tenses*—"modalities of action," as they have been called¹—which may be traced back through his master Eichhorn to that patriarch of Semitic learning, Albert Schultens.

¹ Caspar Levias, in "Jewish Encyclopædia."

The dry rules of Syntax were now seen to be intelligible and alive by being brought into organic relation with the fundamental laws of language and thought. So that, however arbitrary and inattentive he might sometimes be in his treatment of details, and however questionable and fanciful in some of his results, he will always have the honour of being called "the second founder of the science of Hebrew language,"¹ and all modern Hebraists will hasten to acknowledge the stimulus they have derived from his works.

3. LITERATURE

In addition to the *apparatus criticus*, detailed on pages 8-11 of "Sermons in Accents," the following volumes on Hebrew Syntax may be profitably consulted by the student:—

(1) The third part of Ewald's *Lehrbuch*, translated from the eighth German edition by Dr. James Kennedy, of Edinburgh, and described by Professor A. B. Davidson as "a complete thesaurus of the language." It is, indeed, a mine of wealth for the O.T. student, and even the preacher who burrows in its pages will never be at a loss for homiletical suggestions.

(2) Müller's *Schulgrammatik* (1878), based

¹ Hitzig.

mainly, according to the *Britannica*, "on Olshausen's method, with the addition of an excellent syntax." The *Syntax* is excellent, and, as translated by Professor Robertson, of Glasgow, will not easily be superseded as a model text-book for the regular work of teaching.

(3) Davidson's *Hebrew Syntax*, a volume better adapted for the study than for the class-room. Its deft phrasing of the rules, combined with a wealth of well-chosen examples, makes it invaluable to the Hebrew expositor, and, like Böttcher's *Ausführliches Lehrbuch*, serves as a sort of grammatical concordance to the Old Testament.

(4) Driver's *Hebrew Tenses*, a volume which, for the ground covered by our present studies, is the most elaborate and informing of all. The more we have studied this book, the stronger the conviction has grown that no greater service could be rendered to Hebrew study than the placing of its wealth of instruction, in some simpler form, into the hands of all Hebrew students. At present it is too massive; but if anyone, with Müller's power of arrangement, Davidson's lucidity of expression, and Driver's thought—and, withal, the graphic touch of happy abandon which is not always found within the trammels of grammatical treatises—could but summarise its main positions,

and issue it as an introductory primer on the subject of the Hebrew Verb, many who are at present overawed by its weight of erudition might be led across the threshold, and revel in the fulness of its teaching. The plan of the present text-book forbade the cherishing of any such ambition; but if the following pages act as a stimulus in the direction of any one of these standard works on Hebrew Syntax, they will not have been written in vain.

CHAPTER III

THE HEBREW TENSES

IT is only in the way of accommodation to the usages of another language that we can speak of "tenses" in Hebrew grammar. A tense indicates the *time* at which any given action takes place. It informs us whether it is past, present, or future. In Hebrew, however, this specification of time does not enter. It has no forms specifically appropriated to indicate date. An action may be conceived as occurring in any one of the three simple time-divisions (past, present, or future); but it is the connection of the whole discourse and not the form of the verb that determines the precise point at issue. Compare the use of the perfect in each of the following passages:—"In the beginning God *created* (בָּרָא) the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1); "He *beholdeth* (רָאָה) all the sons of men" (Ps. xxxiii. 13); "And Leah said, Happy am I! for the daughters *will call me happy* (אֲשֵׁרוּנִי)" (Gen. xxx. 13). It is the

same verbal form that is used in all the three instances; but it is a different temporal signification that is attributed to each. The precise reference is derived from the context, and then, a more definite meaning having been assigned to the verbal action, it is represented in each of the three passages as an Aorist, a present and a future respectively. Obviously the tense itself is no sufficient guide for determining the date. The precise point or order of time must be deduced from the context.

It is the *character* of the action, and not the time of its occurrence, which is the distinguishing peculiarity of the Hebrew idiom. In Greek we can express both character and date. We can describe the verbal action as a momentary act (aorist) or as a continuous activity (present); and at the same time we can clearly specify the time of the action by having recourse to the past, present, and future tenses of classical or biblical Greek. In Hebrew, on the contrary, the various verbal forms are restricted to the former. They mark the character of the action without fixing the date. But since they do this in an exceedingly animated and emotional manner, they can introduce shades of distinction and a variety of meanings that are far beyond the compass of our more prosaic tense-specifications. In particular,

they can express the three fundamental conceptions of *incipiency*, *continuance*, and *completion*. The speaker, from his more imaginative standpoint, can view the action—whether in the past, present, or future—either as *nascent* or coming into being, *continuous*, or extending over a definite period of time, or *completed*—i.e., finished, happened, past; and as these three ideas are suitably represented by the Imperfect, the Participle, and the Perfect, we may profitably assign one short chapter to each.

But before doing so, the preacher may find an instructive practical illustration at Ps. xxxii. 5 :—

My sin I began to make known (incipient imperfect), and mine iniquity have I not hid (present-perfect) :

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ;

And Thou, Thou forgavest (aorist) the iniquity of *my sin*. [Selah.]

Some of the details in this passage are so suggestive that, while the tenses themselves paint a picture, the order of the Hebrew words, the emphatic character of the accents, and the aid of the LXX all serve to give tone and colour to a picture thus sketched in the rough. In a word, it furnishes a good example of what we mean by a “Sermon in Syntax”; and as a specimen

of what may be found in the Bible *passim*, we will analyse its wealth of teaching a little more in detail.

1. THE NATURE OF SIN

חַטָּאתַי, "my sin," is the first word in the Hebrew text, and also the last, the musical addition, "Selah," not being regarded as an integral part of the verse. It is placed first for the sake of emphasis, for unlike Ps. vi. (the first of the Penitential Psalms), which never mentions the subject of sin at all, Ps. xxxii. (the second in the group) introduces this topic as its leading and characteristic note. So strongly did some of the punctuators feel this, that they pointed the first word with an emphatic *Paseq*.¹ They wished to represent to eye and ear what was already felt to be present in reality, that sin was the dominant idea in this Psalm, and that both melody and Syntax might justly be requisitioned to emphasise the truth.

And is this not the teaching of etymology? In this one verse no fewer than three Hebrew words are employed to designate moral evil. And while, etymologically, they are all figurative terms, transferred from the physical sphere to the

¹ Wickes, "Poetical Accentuation," p. 89.

ethical, they furnish in their combination a fairly exhaustive summary of the Bible doctrine of sin. Probably the most distinctive epithet is the term פֶּשַׁע, usually translated transgression or *rebellion*, a conception which traces sin to its fruitful source in the will of the individual. It is not simply ἀνομία, in the sense of defection from a prescribed law (as the LXX in ver. 1); it is a voluntary act of self-assertion in opposition to the will of a superior. It is withdrawal from, or rebellion against the Lawgiver (Ps. li. 4). Beginning with this as its starting-point, the subsequent development of moral evil is not difficult to trace. It is עוֹן, *iniquity*. It is a course *crooked* and *perverse*, and, therefore, well chosen to denote the tortuous path of the rebel, who, instead of following the straight route for the attainment of man's chief end, wanders zig-zag over the desert and never reaches his destined goal. This is the precise thought introduced by the third term חַטָּאת, *sin* (LXX, ἀμαρτία). The slinger has failed to *hit the mark*, or the traveller to reach his destination; for having begun wrong he cannot end right, and the forsaker is himself forsaken. Obviously, the man who could multiply these terms in order to depict his moral malady had no superficial views

regarding its nature and influence. The disturbing presence of moral evil had invaded the sphere of the conscience.

2. THE CONFESSION OF SIN

It is in this connection that we speak of the Hebrew tenses as painting a picture. In verses 3, 4, the Psalmist had been forced to admit that if he foolishly kept silence regarding his sin, he was constrained to cry out because of his misery.

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old
Through my roaring all the day long.

The cry of misery, however, is not always the birth-throes of a deep and genuine confession. Many a sufferer cries out in anguish who has no intention of recognising the hand that smites him, or of admitting the essential justice of the visitation. Confession of sin is rendered possible only when the afflicted one is made to feel the depth of his demerit, and begins to acknowledge to himself or others the grievous character of his backsliding. And this is the exact meaning of the *incipient imperfect* which is here employed by the Psalmist. "My sin *I began to make known*"—the tense of the verb graphically repre-

senting the nascent confession in the very act of beginning. It had not as yet assumed the form of a direct appeal to Jehovah; for probably we ought to read with the LXX, *τὴν ἁμαρτίαν μου ἐγνώρισα*, where the Hebrew suffix *ka*, "unto thee," has been omitted. The man had only reached the initial stage of his confession, as he tried to make plain to his own heart and conscience the peculiar heinousness of his sin. But the second stage speedily followed. The more he realised the presence of the foul intruder which had usurped his innermost being, the more he determined to drag it forth into the open, and expose it to the searching glance of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold evil. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord"—until now, as the gracious result, he bows in the felt presence of Jehovah, a guileless and transparent life: "mine iniquity *have I not hid*" (*present perfect*). This is the true nature of confession. It includes the heart, the speech, and the life. It begins with a secret resolution in the soul, which, by and by, finds expression in a direct appeal to Jehovah; but the consequences of the completed action are continued into the present, and the Psalmist can speak of the blessedness of the man "in whose spirit there is *no guile*" (ver. 2).

3. THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

“And thou—thou *forgavest* the iniquity of my sin.” The student will note the Aoristic use of the perfect, and the emphasis impressed on the pronoun “thou.” They combine to enforce the truth that Jehovah was more willing to forgive the returning penitent than the man himself was to come and solicit the blessing. The Psalmist was reviewing the various steps in his confession—how behind the transparent attitude of his present was lying the verbal appeal which he had addressed to Jehovah, and behind the actual presentation of his prayer the initial resolution of the heart—and *there* at the beginning of it all, like heart answering heart in an inner sanctuary, the divine response was granted to the silent appeal, and the penitent entered into the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. As in the teaching of the Pearl of Parables, the Father had not waited for the verbal confession of the prodigal son. He beheld the lonely figure a great way off; and before a single word had fallen from his lips, the tears of an undying affection were falling upon his neck. “I said, I *will confess* . . . and thou—thou *forgavest* the iniquity of my sin.”

The nature of the forgiveness is fully set forth in verses 1, 2. If no fewer than three Hebrew terms were required to describe the sin, no fewer than three similar figures are necessary to depict the remedy. It is at once the lifting of a burden, the covering of a foul stain, and the cancelling of a debt. The burden is removed, as in Bunyan's immortal allegory; the stain is hidden out of sight, as by the love that covereth a multitude of sins; and the debt having been wiped out by the exercise of sovereign mercy, is no longer reckoned against the offender as a dreaded liability to punishment. And as all this is described at least in verse 1 by the use of the *passive participle*, we have a form of expression which is eloquent with meaning as to the origin and continuity of the forgiven state. "The passive participle describes the subject as having the action continually exercised upon him, or at least differs from the adjective in presenting the state of the subject as the result of an action."¹

Blessed is the man who abides in this state of forgiveness, for both in origin and result the two lines of development approach and coincide. What began as Aorists in the completed actions of the past ("I said" . . . "thou forgavest") is continued

¹ Davidson's "Hebrew Syntax," p. 130.

as present-perfects or passive participles into the spiritual conditions of the present; and the continuity of the one is reflected in the continuity of the other, like the blue of sea and sky in their unity.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERFECT

THE form indicating completeness is naturally taken first ; for while, in every instance, the idea of incipency must precede and prepare the way for the finished action, it is the finished act itself, and not the thought of *becoming* (*werdend*, *γινόμενον*) which is the more easily grasped conception of the two. Not that the meaning of the Hebrew Perfect is either simple or constant. Canon Driver has enumerated no fewer than thirteen different applications of its fundamental idea. It extends all the way from the *pluperfect* in the remote past to the closely allied *future perfect* in the yet unknown future ; and it fills up the entire gap between the two with a series of gradations that is full of interest for the preacher. Cf. Isa. vi. 6, where the action described by the pluperfect is already a thing of the past, when the seraph approaches the abashed prophet with the symbol of his purification. Or Isa. iv. 4, in which a similar collocation of actions,

but descriptive of the future, is expressed by the use of the future perfect. "It shall come to pass, that he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy : when the Lord *shall have washed away* (רָחַץ) the filth of the daughters of Zion." Similarly in Micah v. 2, the birth of the promised deliverer is already viewed as a thing accomplished, when the time for the return of the residue of his brethren has at last arrived—"when she that beareth *shall have borne*" (יִלְדָּה). These are the two termini within which the wonderful animation of the Hebrew Perfect can move through its various gradations; and yet however important and suggestive its different applications, it will be sufficient for our present purpose to emphasise three practical distinctions.

1. THE PERFECT IN PAST TIME

In past time, the perfect is used to express ideas as widely differentiated as those of the Greek Aorist and Perfect. In other words, it denotes an action completed at a definite moment in past time, with the no less significant addition that while its inception and realisation belong to the past, its consequences may be continued up to the time of speaking and issue in a state or condition that dominates the whole. Cf. Gen. xxxii. 11

where the two senses are found side by side. "For with my staff I *passed over* (aorist) this Jordan; and now I *am become*, or *have become* (LXX, γέγονα), two companies." Or Ps. xxxii. 4, where, instead of the A.V. "*is changed*," we must read with the R.V. "*was changed* (aorist); for the context shows that the Psalmist was looking back on a condition of things no longer existing. On the other hand, the perfect "*have forsaken*" in Isa. i. 4 indicates as no aorist could do the hapless condition of a disobedient people. The forsaking of Jehovah was indeed a thing of the past; but there, at the moment of speaking, the prophet was confronted with the unutterably sad result—Israel, on a lower level than the beasts that perish, was seeking her *own hurt* (cf. vers. 3, 5).

For a practical illustration of this distinction the preacher may turn to Ps. xxxi. 8:—

Let me be glad and rejoice in thy lovingkindness :
For thou *didst see* my affliction ;
Thou *didst take notice* of my soul in adversities.

To render the last two verbs as *perfects*, and thus to continue the consequences of a past deliverance up to the time of writing, does not do justice, either to the Psalmist's grief, or to the depth of distress depicted in his present suffering (vers. 10, 11). The tone of the latter is so dejected that it has been suggested that

the two passages could not have proceeded from one and the same hand. The man who laments saying, "Mine eye wasteth away with grief, yea, my soul and my body," could not have said, "For thou *hast seen* my affliction ; thou *hast known* my soul in adversities." The force of this objection, however, is at once bereft of its seriousness the moment we realise the probability that the verbs in this passage are aoristic. The Psalmist is thinking of a former condition or experience that no longer exists. His past deliverance is as real and precious a fact as ever ; but the consequences of the action are not continued into the present as by an act of appropriating faith. Memory, with her fitful torch, may hie back across the intervening gulf ; but however helpful her light may be, it is not sufficient to dispel the gloom, or to give clearness to the eye that has become bleared and dim through weeping. It may be strong enough to lead the afflicted one to the exercise of *prayer* (cohortative) ; but not to the glad assurance of the R.V., "*I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.*" In the fitful gleam of memory the man is not yet able to recover his former trust ; but he can do something no less pleasing in the sight of the Eternal. He can look up even through his tears, and say, "*Let me be glad and rejoice in Thy lovingkindness.*" He

can pray for deliverance. Hence a suitable division of our subject would be :—

1. His present distress (vers. 10, 11).
2. The memory of a past deliverance (aorists).
3. A prayer for a repetition of former mercies (cohortatives).

2. THE PERFECT IN PRESENT TIME

In a second use of the Hebrew Perfect, the idea of completion is best translated as a *present*. This includes the so-called “perfect of experience,” or a class of actions so frequent in their occurrence that they have come to be regarded as general truths, and are accepted as axiomatic. Isa. i. 3, “The ox *knoweth* his owner;” xl. 7, “The grass *withereth* ;” Ps. lxxxiv. 4, “The sparrow *findeth* an house;” xxxiv. 11, “The young lions *do lack* and *suffer* hunger.” And especially Ps. xlii. 3 (Heb.), “My soul *thirsteth* (צמאָה) for God.” This is something more than conscious reiteration of the act (like the imperfect “panteth” of verse 2); it is the instinctive turning of the entire life to God, even when the spiritual “hart” has no occasion to pant. Panting for God in each time of trouble is much ; but a habit of the soul, which has been generated by experience, is something more and deeper. The soul turns to Jehovah, as the ass to his master’s crib.

The main application, however, of this second usage is found in connection with a class of verbs (*statives*) which describe a condition of mind or body that is looked upon as actually existing. In these the emphasis rests, not upon the actions which have produced the result, but upon the result itself as their necessary terminus or expression; and therefore unlike the Hebrew perfect, which still retains an echo of the preliminary process, the ultimate effect is more adequately represented by means of the English present. Cf. the use of יָרַעַתִּי = *oida*, properly "I have perceived," therefore *I know*; or זָכַרְתִּי = *memini*, "I have borne in mind" (*mens*), therefore *I remember*; or the equally expressive phrase in Ps. xxxviii. 16, where the oft-repeated exercise of trust has developed into a state of mind and heart whose patience is only excelled by its confidence:—

For in Thee, O Lord, do I *hope* :

Thou wilt answer, O Lord my God.

The use of מְלֵאָה in Ps. civ. 24 is no less suggestive in its imagery. It occurs in what Oehler has so fitly described as "a commentary on Gen. i."; but, as the *stative verb* so forcibly reminds us, the poet is thinking, not so much of the original filling of the earth, when all the sons

of God shouted for joy, as of its *present condition* of palpitating exuberance which fills it to overflowing, whether men come to stand within its sanctuary or not. With this key in our hands, does not the whole verse become luminous with meaning? The earth is *full*—

1. Of unlimited variety.
2. Of infinite wisdom.
3. Of inexhaustible beneficence.

“O Lord, how *manifold* are Thy works!” It is like the “divers portions and in divers manners” of divine revelation (Heb. i. 1). Nay more, “in *wisdom* hast Thou made them all”; so that, however complicated the manifold system may be, it *is* a system, each part subordinated to, and yet a safeguard for, the perfect adjustment of the whole. It is a beautifully arranged cosmos. And therefore it is full of *what Thou hast originated*—Thy creation (LXX, τῆς κτίσεώς σου), Thy possession (Vulg., *tua possessione*; Wycliffe, *thi possessioun*), or, Thy untold wealth (R.V., *riches*). The term קִנְיָהּ, from קָנָה, to acquire, is sufficiently comprehensive to embrace all these meanings. As applied to Jehovah, who is the Creator of the earth (Gen. xiv. 19), no less than the Redeemer of His people (Deut. xxxii. 6), the idea of acquiring or possessing shades off into

the kindred conception of originating or creating ; and since the creation, as already depicted, is stamped with *variety* and *wisdom*, it at once suggests the further application that what is thus originated by the great Creator must be for the creature's good. It is full of variety to please the eye, of wisdom to satisfy the mind, and of untold wealth of beneficence to bless and beautify the life. And thus the whole theme is to be set to music. It is to pass into the profound adoration of the opening exclamation, "*O Lord*, how manifold," etc. For, as Calvin reminds us, "only then do we ascribe due honour to God ; when seized with astonishment, we acknowledge that our tongues and all our senses fail us in doing justice to so great a subject."

3. THE PERFECT IN FUTURE TIME

This third use of the Hebrew Perfect is best seen in the higher forms of Old Testament literature. In impassioned descriptions of the future the ordinary usages of prose narrative are frequently abandoned for the more emotional and idealistic idioms of inspired prophecy. At one moment the speaker contemplates the future scene from the *real standpoint* of the present, and describes it in the imperfect or future tenses of ordinary Hebrew prose ; but the next moment

he is carried forward to an *ideal position* in the future, and looks back on the completed action as though it were already past. In this way he is able to diversify his style by a pleasing alternation of perfect and imperfect tenses, and to reproduce with a certain touch of reality the assured feeling of certainty with which he contemplates the future. By the use of what is called *the prophetic perfect* he vividly represents it as already accomplished. Cf. Num. xxiv. 17, where the illuminated seer exclaims, "A star *hath proceeded* (יָרָדָה) out of Jacob"; though the more prosaic English version has to render "shall come forth," the allusion being to the future greatness of Israel's golden age. Or recall the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the shoot from the stock of Jesse, in which it is added, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth *shall be full* (perfect, מְלֵאָה) of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (vii. 9)—lit., *is full*; for the prophet from his more idealistic standpoint is looking back on the promise as already fulfilled. Even modern languages are not constrained to employ future tenses in these poetical descriptions. They prefer the more energetic and definite *present*. For while the events depicted can only be realised

in the future, it is the function of the poet to conserve the prophet's idealism, and to provide a suitable medium for the unveiling of his thought. Thus, "Howl, O fir tree; for the cedar *is fallen*" (Zech. xi. 2); "Arise, shine; for thy light *is come*" (Isa. lx. 1); "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (ix. 1); "Righteousness and peace *have kissed each other*" (Ps. lxxxv. 11).

In all this, however, we have simply an expansion of what is already found in the unimpassioned diction of ordinary prose. Corresponding to the prophetic perfect, we have the so-called *perfect of certitude*—a form of expression which is specially applicable to the promises and threats of Jehovah, whose will is equivalent to His deed (Gen. xv. 18; Isa. xlii. 1). Here the perfect **נִתְּתִי** is used to emphasise the reality of the promise, that the giving of the land, or the bestowing of the Spirit, will assuredly be realised in the future. Still the same idiom is common, even in human relation, as when Abraham answers Ephron the Hittite, saying, "*I give thee* (**נִתְּתִי**) the price of the field" (Gen. xxiii. 13)—even though the silver is not weighed nor the bargain concluded till verse 16. Indeed, in all actions dependent on the unalterable will of the

speaker, or regarded as inevitable from the mere force of circumstances, or even confidently expected because of the fulness of the divine promise, the accomplishment of the action may be spoken of as having already taken place, and the perfect of volition, as the formula of completion, be employed to ratify the truth. Boaz, for instance, in speaking of Naomi's determination to sell her land, says, "Naomi *selleth* (מְכַרָּה, lit., has sold, or has resolved to sell) her field-portion" (Ruth iv. 3). And the Psalmist, allowing this feeling of certitude to pass over into the perfect of confidence, exclaims, "Now know I that the Lord *saveth* (הוֹשִׁיעַ) His anointed"—*i.e.*, will save him, or is sure to save him in the future; for he immediately adds:—

He *will* answer him from His holy heaven
With the saving strength of His right hand.
(Ps. xx. 7.)

A concluding practical illustration may be found at Ps. vi. 8:—

Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity :
For the Lord *hath heard* the voice of my weeping.

The words occur in what is known as the first penitential Psalm; and no more fitting plaint could be put into the lips of any pious sufferer.

It is like the minor melodies of external nature. The wail of the forest, the disconsolate accents of ocean, the monotonous chant of the waterfall, the bleating of flocks among the hills, and the weird-like call of the moor-fowl among the heather—all these seem to be pervaded with a suggestion of autumn's sadness ; and we are made to feel that the nearer we get back to nature the more appropriate become the minor tunes and plaintive melodies of these penitential Psalms. In the present instance, we have a simple, three-fold division—

(1) THE DIVINE CHASTISEMENT

“Neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure” (ver. 1). As if to suggest the reflection that the chastisement had already been carried too far, the sufferer spreads out his wretchedness in the sight of God's great pity, and paints it in all the sad colouring of the autumn. “*I am withered away*”—like a faded flower (ver. 2, R.V.). As a fragile flower, bereft of the rain and sunshine, I trail my drooping blossoms in the dust. “And Thou, O Lord, how long?” His suffering was a deep he could not fathom ; but he spreads it out in the presence of Him who is at once justice and love—like a wounded animal crawling up to the feet of its master, and looking

up into his face with great eyes of pain. For, after all, the divine mercy might triumph over judgment; and the flower that was trailing its blossoms in the dust, might once more unfold its petals in the sunshine.

(2) THE DIVINE LOVINGKINDNESS

“O save me for Thy lovingkindness’ sake” (ver. 4). This is Jehovah’s covenant love. He delights in mercy. He is ready to forgive. Let him be true, then, to his own nature! Let his self-revelation in act be consistent with the inner graciousness of his motive! For to give another turn to the Psalmist’s thought, would not the divine lovingkindness be deprived of a part of its legitimate praise if the present prayer of the singer should be left unanswered? He would not be found in the land of the living at all. He would be given over to the gloomy abode of the dead; and then the days of praising God’s mercy would once and for all be ended (ver. 5). It is a sombre reflection, and prepares one for the truly Oriental description of grief contained in verses 6, 7. Not only did he set his bed afloat with his unmeasured weeping, but he melted his couch and wasted away his eyes until they became bleared and dim like those of an old

man. The experience was bitter in the extreme, yet it proved to be the darkness that precedes the dawn. It prepared the way for the sudden burst of sunshine with which this penitential Psalm concludes.

(3) THE DIVINE DELIVERANCE

As a flash of light, the conviction has come to the man that Jehovah has heard his prayer. His bodily disease is not yet lifted, the dark prison-walls of hostility are not yet removed; but a whisper from the eternities has visited the man's soul, and he knows that the hour of his deliverance has already come. None of his detractors are aware of the swift advent of the dawn, but the voice of the dawn is already in his heart; and he can gaze at the hill-tops now being flushed with the coming glory, and say, "The Lord *hath heard* the voice of my weeping."

In other words, like all sanctified affliction, the song of penitence has ended in the assurance of God's covenant mercy. It began quite otherwise. Like a mountain stream it was turbid and broken at the first, but gradually it has calmed and cleared as it flowed, until now, at the close, it loses the voice of its weeping in the assurance of the divine compassion, just as the flowing streamlet is stilled in the fulness of the sea.

CHAPTER V

THE IMPERFECT

UNLIKE the Perfect which expresses the idea of completion, the Imperfect denotes events and actions that are still in the act of *becoming*. It is wonderfully elastic and life-like. Instead of being fixed and impassive like our own prosaic tense-specifications, it is capable of assuming any form which may be impressed upon it by the will of the speaker or by the exigencies of the context. It is really action in *movement*, and therefore presents a picture of surprising brilliancy and life. At the root of all its shades of meaning is found the idea of what is nascent or *incipient*. It indicates an event or action that is about to take place, or enter upon a course of practical realisation. Cf. the use of *συνεπληροῦντο* in Luke viii. 23—not, “they *were filled*” (A.V.), but “*were filling*” (R.V.)—the incipient imperfect bringing into prominence the process which introduced, and was preliminary to, the complete execution of the act. By a slight expansion of this thought,

the idea of incipency may easily pass over into that of *recurrency*. For what is ready to take place is liable and likely to occur more than once; and thus the idea of reiteration is readily superinduced upon the more limited signification of the imperfect. Cf. Judges vi. 5, where the marauding bands of the Midianites “came up” (יַעֲלוּ)—i.e., *used to come up*, season by season, to waste and pillage the country. On the other hand, the idea of incipency might have led us in another direction—not to the element of reiteration in the past or present, but to the possibility of events and actions in the still unrealised future. It is at this point that the meaning of the imperfect shades off into the idea of *modality*. For what is ready to come to pass is also that which *may* or *can* come to pass; and since this is frequently characterised by an element of uncertainty, it may come to express, especially after particles denoting *purpose* and the like, what Greek and Latin denote, not by the indicative which is the mood of certainty, but by the subjunctive, the mood of contingency. Deut. iv. 40, “Thou shalt keep His statutes, and His commandments, . . . *that thou mayest prolong* (לְמַעַן תַּאֲרִיד) thy days upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” The incipient force of the action may develop in

both of these directions. It may assume the sense of reiteration, or the no less significant nuance of modality. And as these are the three main uses of this peculiarly elastic form, we may profitably gather a few typical examples illustrative of each.

1. THE INCIPIENT IMPERFECT.

As nascent or egressive in its action, it presents a vivid contrast to the Hebrew perfect. Seizing upon the action while it is yet evolving, and not after it has been brought to completion, it pictures it to the mental eye with peculiar vividness and power. And it does this in all the three time-divisions in which the perfect also is employed. Alike in the past, the present, and the future, it emphasises the distinction between movement and rest. *Cf.* passages like Ex. xv. 5; Job iv. 5; Gen. iii. 15, 19, and the Bible *passim*.

In the first of these, the event or action belongs to the previous history of the Hebrews. But instead of bringing the past into his own present, the writer transports himself back to the scene in question, and portrays the event in all its thrilling grandeur as evolving and transpiring before his eyes. "The deeps *cover* them" (יִכְסִימוּ), not "*have covered* them" (A.V.), but surround and

engulf them in their whirling foam, even while the Hebrews standing upon the shore gaze on the appalling havoc of the sea. It recalls the majestic ode of the prophet Habakkuk in chap. iii. 3-15, where, by the help of a similar "historical present," the great deliverances of the past are vividly depicted as an evolving and progressive present :—

God *cometh* (יָבוֹא) from Teman,
And the Holy One from mount Paran ;

—and the sun and moon both withdraw their shining, outshone by the brightness of his glittering spear.

In Job iv. 5, on the contrary, Eliphaz is picturing an action which is conceived as really taking place in the *present* :—

Behold, thou hast instructed many,
But now it *is come* unto thee, and thou faintest ;
It *toucheth* (תִּגַּע) thee, and thou art troubled.

Lit., it *is touching* thee—the incipient imperfect depicting the disease of the patriarch as still running its course. Just as in Ps. ii. 2, we read :—

The kings of the earth *set* themselves,
where the imperfect most graphically describes the rebel leaders as actually forming into line.

The use of the imperfect in *future* time is the

natural expansion of this latter idiom. The future is emphatically τὸ μέλλον, and therefore the idea of incipency is peculiarly applicable to it. Instead of being regarded as finished, the contemplated event has not as yet begun to embody itself in practical realisation. The possibility, however, of such a development is confidently expected; and thus innumerable instances are found in Scripture where the future and imperfect coincide. "It *shall* bruise thy head, and thou *shalt* bruise his heel." "In the sweat of thy face *shalt* thou eat bread." And so on.

As a practical illustration of incipient action, but in the past, the preacher may turn to Deut. xxxii. 10. By a kind of *prophetic imperfect* (as we may call it) the writer transports himself, not into the future, but into the past, and pictures Jehovah's dealings with the infant nation as a progressive or historical present.

He *finds* him (יִמְצְאֵהוּ) in a desert land,
And in the waste howling wilderness;
He encompasses him, he cares for him,
He keeps him as the apple of his eye.

The finding of Israel is not to be regarded as a completed action in past time, like the perfect מְצָאֵהוּ in Hos. ix. 10. It is the august beginning of a divine and age-long discipline. It is the

commencement of a process which, as paraphrased in the LXX, is intended to make Israel, even in the wilderness, "independent of outward circumstances" (*αὐτάρκησεν*).¹ And therefore it includes significant steps like these:—

- (1) The finding of the lost (*cf.* Ps. cxix. 176).
- (2) The instructing (*παιδεύω*) of the ignorant.
- (3) The shielding of the weak, or it may be, the safeguarding of the precious.

This latter idea is suggested by the expressive figure, "the apple (*lit., the little man*) of his eye." The pronoun "his" is sufficiently ambiguous to apply either to God or man. For this reason, the devout Sopherim, in their efforts to remove all anthropomorphisms, did not deem it necessary to add this passage to the other eighteen "corrections" or "emendations of the scribes." In Zech. ii. 12, on the other hand, the phrase "my eye" was considered too bold an expression to apply to the Holy One of Israel, and therefore it was changed by these devout scholars into "his eye," so as to admit of the same twofold reference. It is probable, however, that the thought of the scribe was somewhat deeper. He was thinking of something both divine and human, and resolved to retain the ambiguous expression because it was capable of reflecting both. What is seen in the

¹ *Cf.* Lightfoot's note on *αὐτάρκεια* in Phil. iv. 11.

eye of a man is not the image of the man himself, but the **אִישׁוֹן**—the tiny reflected image of the observer. The eye itself may belong to the creature, but the image, the apple, the pupil, is the reflection of another. And as this twofold conception flashed through the mind of the Sophēr or scribe, the ambiguous expression was allowed to remain to express the complexity and deep spiritual suggestiveness of the thought. Justly, then, may one speak of the *safeguarding of the precious*; for when one is thus found, instructed and kept, he becomes not simply *αὐτάρκης*, “independent of outward circumstances,” but bears also the image or far-off reflection of the Eternal, and is “kept as the **אִישׁוֹן** of his eye.”

2. THE FREQUENTATIVE IMPERFECT

It is only in present or past time that the element of recurrency is to be found or expected. In future events, the mind of the speaker is so engaged with the possibility or imminence of the first occurrence, that the need is not felt of going beyond that point, and of facing the question whether the contemplated action is to be repeated or not. The mind is satisfied with the simple element of futurity, or at most with the varied modifications necessary to indicate mood. It is

quite otherwise, however, with incipient action in present or past time. In these the single act may be distributed over an indefinite number of possible or actual realisations; and the idea is introduced, either in the form of a general maxim or as a clearly expressed habit, that the principle of reiteration in disposition or conduct is the fully recognised fact. Alike in present or in past time, we can speak of a frequentative imperfect.

In present time, for example, we have a passage like Ex. xiii. 15, where the pious Israelite is enjoined to instruct his children with respect to the redemption of the first-born. He is to point them back to the tragic experience of the Exodus, and say, "The Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the womb, being males; but all the first-born of my sons *I redeem*" (אֶפְדֶּה, lit., am in the habit of redeeming). The idiom, as thus defined, ought never to be neglected in the practical work of exposition. How much more realistic the imagery becomes, when we read, as in Isa. v. 11, "Woe unto them that *are in the habit of* rising up early, that they may follow strong drink"; or when we turn to the picture of the righteous man in Ps. i. 2, and render, "And in his

law doth he meditate, or, *is in the habit of meditating* (יְהַגֵּד) day and night." Alas ! the practice of backsliden Israel in the time of Hosea was altogether different. " My people *ask* (שָׁאַל) counsel at their stock . . . and *burn incense* upon the hills . . . therefore your daughters *commit* whoredom, and your brides *commit* adultery " (iv. 12-13). This was something more than the completed act or moral condition denoted by the perfect : it was the succession of acts or reiterated occurrences by which the moral condition had been reached. And while it is not always possible or desirable to reproduce this distinction in English, especially when the two verbal forms are found side by side, it is in every way desirable to keep the original difference in mind, and allow it, wherever practicable, to enter into the work of exposition. Cf. Ps. xxxviii. 11 :—

My lovers and my friends *stand* (imperfect) aloof from
my plague ;
And my kinsmen *stand* (perfect) afar off.

His daily visitors treat him as a leper. They make him feel by their repeated visits that a real gulf of sentiment has suddenly opened between him and them. While his kinsmen, like Job's three friends, have only approached him from a distance ; but biased in mind, because of precon-

ceived opinions, they also stand, even on this first visit, and affect to be dismayed at the spectacle of his wretchedness. Contrast the language of the first penitential Psalm, where the perfects express the Psalmist's completed state of exhaustion, while the imperfects reproduce his repeated acts.

I am weary (perfect) with my groaning ;
 Every night *make* I my bed to swim ;
I water (imperfect) my couch with my tears.
 (Ps. vi. 7.)

And may not a similar distinction be found at Job iii. 17 ?—

There the wicked *cease* (perf.) from troubling ;
 And there the weary *be at rest* (imperf.).

The former conception is negative, and therefore completed ; but the latter is positive, and therefore continuous and progressive. The being at rest is not necessarily the idea of cessation. It is a positive conception, and big with the promise of what may yet be. Like a seed-corn, it will grow as religion grows ; and there may spring from it in the coming years the doctrine of a blessed immortality. The patriarch himself did not see this ; but who can fail to feel that in this graphic interchange of tenses we have an element of animation and a flash of spiritual

insight which we can ill afford to lose. It may be simpler and less pedantic to render both verbs by the English *present*; but the difference in the original is always to be noted, and allowed to enter into the mind of the preacher as an essential element in his thinking.

Judges vi. 5 has already been cited as a suitable illustration of frequentative action in *past* time; but the preacher will find an equally interesting example at Isa. i. 21. A profound moral declension is depicted in this verse; but as the imperfect יִלִּין, or the concluding participle מְרַצְּחִים, so forcibly reminds us, it is not so much a contrast between two single acts, as a comparison between two courses of action which can only be described as habitual. Righteousness *used to lodge* (lit., pass the night) within the city; but now *assassins* (an intensive piel participle = whose who murder by profession). A similar degeneration is suggested by the participial form נִאֲמָנָה in the former half of the verse. She that was *characterised by faithfulness* has become one who, like the assassin, is a wrongdoer by profession. "The *faithful* city has become an *harlot*!" While, to complete the picture, we are pointed to a similar result by the teaching of an emended accentuation. Common

editions, like Theile's, place a *Zaqeph* (instead of *R'bhia*) on the term "judgment," as if this were the chief logical pause in Silluq's clause (*cf.* the semicolon in the A.V.). But the parallelism of the sense is entirely ruined by this arrangement. The antithesis in the first half of the verse is between *faithful* and *harlot*, and in the second half between *justice* (doubly expressed) and high-handed *oppression*. Consequently the main logical pause is not to be placed on "judgment," as in our English version, but between the acknowledged rectitude of Israel's past, and the unwonted violence and unrighteousness of her present. So that the whole verse may be arranged in the form of a tetrastich. Thus—

How has become an harlot,
 The city that was faithful !
 Full of judgment, righteousness used to lodge in her ;
 But now assassins.

The passage furnishes a striking illustration of the development of moral evil.

- (1) Unfaithfulness towards God (first couplet).
- (2) Unrighteousness towards man (second couplet).
- (3) The whole passing into a deep-seated moral condition through the influence of reiteration. The continually repeated act of the will has become the habit of the life.

3. THE IMPERFECT OF MODALITY.

In future events, as already indicated, it is incipency rather than recurrency that is the dominant idea. The thought of incipency, however, is wonderfully elastic. It is capable of taking any direction or of assuming any form that may be impressed upon it from without. And as the idea of time is not inherent in the tense at all, it can be used with the different nuances of permission, capacity, command, volition, and contingency in all the three time-divisions of ordinary speech. It may be expressed by *may* or *might*, *can* and *could*, *will* and *would*, *shall* and *should*, and so on, according to the will of the speaker, the subject of the verbal action, or the sense of the context. Job xl. 25, "*Canst* thou draw out Leviathan with a fish hook?" Jer. xxiv. 2, "Figs, which *could not* be eaten, they were so bad." Job xiv. 21, "His sons come (better, *may come*) to honour, and he knoweth it not." Isa. xl. 30, "Even the youths shall faint (or, *may faint*) and be weary." Gen. ii. 19, "And brought them unto the man to see what he *would* call them." 1 Sam. xxii. 22, "And David said, I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he *would* surely tell Saul."

Similarly, after particles expressing *purpose* and the like. Gen. xii. 13, "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: *that* (לְמַעַן) *it may* be well with me for thy sake." Job vi. 2, "Oh *that* (הִנֵּה) my vexation *were but weighed*, And my calamity laid in the balances together." Isa. i. 18, "*Though* (אֲמָן) your sins *be* as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Or as a practical illustration at the close of this chapter, we may turn to the use of the Imperfect after אֵין in Amos v. 15, "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: *peradventure* Jehovah, the God of hosts, *may be gracious* unto the remnant of Joseph." What is the meaning of this expressive particle? The rendering of the LXX—ὅπως ἐλεήσῃ—is not difficult to follow. Interpreting the first half of the verse as a statement of the conditions, on the fulfilment of which the favour of God would assuredly be granted, they have introduced a final or telic particle (like the לְמַעַן = ὅπως in Deut. iv. 40) to indicate the design or purpose of the preceding acts. "Hate the evil, and love the good, . . . *in order that* Jehovah, the God of hosts, may be gracious." But was this the thought of Amos, the herdman of Tekoa? Did he wish to

teach that, even at the eleventh hour, all that Israel had to do was to practise private rectitude and civil justice in order to wipe out the record of her evil past? Or did another consideration flash through his mind, and instinctively modify and mould his language?—that Israel's sin being so obdurate, and persisted in so long, the conditions specified might not be sufficient to wipe out the unhallowed past, but that a broader basis for the exercise of forgiving love must be sought, not in man, but in the divine mercy itself. True, the clemency of love must be consistent with the righteousness of law; and this suggests the further thought that in the coming purification, only a "remnant" of the nation may survive and outlast the storm. For this reason, the utmost that the prophet will allow himself to affirm is the "peradventure" of a profound humility—a word that leaves the way open for all that the fuller light of a Messianic fulfilment may yet bring to man—a word, at least, which paves the way for the final reconciliation of justice and mercy, when the claims of righteousness having been fully satisfied, mercy will open her alabaster cruse, and bind up the wounds of the faithful remnant. Who shall say that the instinct of the punctuator was at fault when he pointed this suggestive particle with an

emphatic R'bhia (אֵלֵּי)? The whole verse suggests a threefold division:—

- (1) A call to repentance (whole verse).
- (2) The human fruits meet for repentance—
(a) Private rectitude ; (b) Civic justice
(first half).
- (3) The assurance of a divine forgiveness, which
is compatible with eternal righteousness
(second half).
“*Peradventure* Jehovah, the God of hosts,
may be gracious unto the remnant of
Joseph.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE PARTICIPLE

LIKE the two tenses already considered, the participle indicates the character of the action without fixing the date. It may, therefore, be treated as a kind of third tense-form by the side of the Perfect and Imperfect. In a variety of instances, indeed, in which stress is to be laid on the *continuance* of the action, the participle admits of being used where neither of the two special tenses would be available. Cf. Ps. xxxii. 1: "Blessed is he whose transgression *is forgiven* (נָשַׁוִּי), whose sin *is covered* (כִּסִּוִּי)." The participle in this passage is remarkably suggestive and effective. It depicts not simply a state of forgiveness, resulting from a completed action in past time (present-perfect), nor a succession of definite acts of forgiveness, presenting the appearance of reiteration (present-imperfect): it is the picture of a man who has the blessing of forgiveness *continuously exercised upon him*—a bless-

ing pressing everywhere for entrance, like the air we breathe, and always seeking to incite and invigorate the spirit with the promise and potency of life. The descriptive power of the participle is really unique. The narrative of the Old Testament may owe much of its life and variety to the use of the bare imperfect; but the conclusion of Canon Driver is fully borne out by the facts, that "in many of the instances the truthful and animated representation of particular scenes is enhanced by the appropriate use of the participle."

1. THE CHARACTER OF ITS ACTION

In defining its particular nuance the participle has to be sharply distinguished from the closely allied frequentative imperfect. The participle prolongs an action, the imperfect multiplies it. "The participle is a line, the imperfect a succession of points."¹ Both the river and the man may reach the sea; but the one does so by an uninterrupted flow, the other by a succession of steps. Mere continuance, in the sense of duration, is never expressed by the imperfect—that is the function of the participle. *Cf.* Isa. vi. 2, where the two forms are found side by side. "Above him stood the seraphim (participle,

¹ Davidson's "Hebrew Syntax," p. 130.

were standing—i.e., during the whole time of vision): each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face (imperfect, *used to cover*), and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly (lit., *used to fly*, as when he went forth on repeated occasions to fulfil Adonai's behests)." The distinction, as thus expressed, is full of interest to the expositor, though it is not always reflected in the English translation. See Ps. xcv. 10:—

Forty years long was I grieved with that generation.

Does this mean that Jehovah was grieved *continuously* throughout the entire period of the wilderness journey, or simply that He was displeased, at intervals, as Israel persisted in falling into sin? There is no such ambiguity in the original. The term used is אָקַרַּט, a frequentative imperfect, and this is decisive for the principle of reiteration. On repeated occasions during those forty years, Jehovah had been tempted to swear in His wrath that Israel would not enter into His rest; for, despite the fact that He had dealt with them as the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand, they had neither listened to His voice nor set their hearts upon His ways. Reiteration and not continuation is the Psalmist's present thought.

For an equally instructive passage the preacher may analyse the teaching of Ps. xix. 1-2 :—

(1) The glory declared by the heavens.

(2) The way in which that glory is declared.

The glory itself is not simply the flashing of light, the blending of colours, the vastness of space, and the immeasurableness of distance—the glory, in a word, of the mechanician who dreams of size, and weight, and movement. The great Creator is not a mechanician. God is a spirit, and the glory stamped upon the heavens is like Himself—spiritual. What, after all, is the law of gravitation but the law of mutual co-operation for the benefit of the whole? The moon cannot say to the earth, “I have no need of thee;” or the earth to the sun, “I have no need of thee.” They are dependent on one another; and because each has accepted the law of a common service, a beautifully arranged cosmos is the result. That is the glory which is stamped upon the heavens—the illuminating fact that the entire universe is kept in equilibrium through each part being in subjection to the attainment of a common good. And that, express it as we may, is the law of the spirit of God. “By His spirit the heavens are garnished” (Job xxvi. 13); and the heavens declare His “glory.”

The way in which this glory is declared is

aptly expressed by the participle. It knows no interruption or break. It goes on and on continuously. The stars never cease to shine ; for that is the law of their being. But that is not the law of the human. Man does not shine and sing because he cannot help it. He *can* help it. He is a star that may cease to shine. He has the power of saying "no" to his Maker. Hence the rule of the participle does not apply to him. He must pass on to the next verse, and note the full force of the imperfect :—

Day unto day *uttereth* speech,
And night unto night *showeth* knowledge.

That is the principle which he obeys. He shows forth the glory of God, not by involuntary continuation, but by voluntary repetition. And let no one say that this is less than nature. Conscious reiteration is not less than unconscious continuity. The part played by man is the outcome of deliberate choice ; and though there may be effort in the choice—much suppression of self and resolute determination to walk in the path of duty—the task will become easier as he advances in the work. The repeated effort becomes habit, and habit passes into second nature, until, like the star after all, the glorifying of God becomes the law of his being. Voluntary repetition of the act has become involuntary continuity.

2. THE FIXING OF THE DATE

This, as in the tenses generally, must be deduced from the context. The scene may be laid in any one of the three time-divisions — past, present, or future—but the precise temporal reference can only be determined by the connection of the whole discourse. In the following instances, the allusion is clearly to the *past*. “Now Hannah, she spake,” lit., *was speaking*, or *kept speaking*, “in her heart,”—viz., all the time that Eli watched the moving of her lips (1 Sam. i. 13). “And the Lord appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat,” lit., *and he was sitting* (יָשָׁב), “in the tent door in the heat of the day” (Gen. xviii. 1). Or Isa. vi. 1, “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train *filled* the temple,” lit., *was filling*, all the time Adonai was seated. In these and similar instances, the writer is delineating past events, and the participle is rightly regarded as a descriptive or historical imperfect. In other passages, however, the scene depicted is as clearly to be laid in the *present*. Ps. iii. 2, “Many there be which *say* of my soul, there is no help for him in God”—better, *are saying*, the unceasing hostility of backbiting tongues being suitably represented by

the participle. Gen. iv. 10, "The voice of thy brother's blood *crieth* unto me from the ground"—lit., *is crying*, not simply at the moment of speaking, but continuously, calling day and night for retribution. Or Deut. iv. 1, "And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes . . . which I *teach* you"—better, which I *am teaching* you, viz., throughout the present series of addresses—that ye may do them in the land "whither ye *go in* to possess it" (ver. 5), lit., *are going in*, the tribes of Israel being represented as actually on the march, and approaching at length the border of their inheritance. While to complete the cycle of time-specification, there is no lack of instances where the participle is legitimately referred to the *future*. 1 Sam. xx. 36, "Find now the arrows which I *shoot*"—lit., *am about to shoot* (אֶנֶכִּי מוֹרֶה); for at the time of speaking, not a single shaft had as yet left the string. Gen. vi. 17, "And I, behold, I do *bring* the flood of waters upon the earth"—better, *I am bringing* or *am about to bring*, the participle, like the *fut. instans*, representing the action as incipient, or as absolutely certain in its approach. Or Isa. iii. 1, where the same idiom is specially applicable to the assured purpose of Jehovah. "Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, *doth take away* from

Jerusalem . . . stay and staff"—*i.e.*, *is about to take away*; for the judgment, though still future, was so near at hand, that it was ready, even while they lingered, to burst forth upon the city.

Or the student may turn to Isa. vii. 14, and investigate the much explained passage—"Behold, a young woman *is with child* (R.V.), and *is about to bear* (fut. participle) a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." The participle יֵלֶדֶת is best understood of the prophet's own age. The event is not only near at hand: it is depicted as already in process of being realised. It refers, in the first instance, to a definite, verifiable event in connection with the Syro-Ephraimitish war. Certainly the king himself was in need of a sign of present deliverance. Defeated and dismayed before the combined attack of Rezin and Pekah, his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind (ver. 2). Isaiah, however, is sent with a promise of divine succour. "Thus saith the Lord God, it shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass" (ver. 7). Let Ahaz but turn to the Lord and ask a sign from Him, and these two smoking firebrands would speedily be quenched. But no; the King was already hankering after the rising power of Assyria (*cf.* verses 17, 18);

and therefore he began to quibble and temporise. He would not presume to ask any pledge from Jehovah, lest he should be found to tempt the Lord his God. Not presume! the prophet immediately burst forth, not in words of promise, as is generally understood, but in accents of awe-inspiring doom: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, *the* young woman (הַעֲלָמָה, probably the young king's newly-wedded wife) is with child, and is about to bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." In other words, in short-sighted gratitude for the brief respite to be won through Assyria, the royal house will flatter itself with the idea that Jehovah, the God of Israel, has been with His people after all; but if He be present in that ill-starred alliance it will be in the sense of a divine manifestation in judgment—a judgment whose fiery energy will lick up the life-blood of the nation. For before the child shall know how to refuse the evil and choose the good the whole land shall be converted into jungle. The disaster would even surpass the disruption of the tribes (ver. 17).

And is the prophecy exhausted by this historical allusion to the times of the Syro-Ephraimitish war? Emphatically we answer no. We have:—

- (1) The meaning of the prediction for Ahaz.
- (2) Its significance for Old Testament prophecy.
- (3) Its application to the divine child in the era of New Testament fulfilment.

To the first, it might be nothing more than a message of *doom*; but to the second (to Isaiah, for example, with "Shear-jashub" by his side) it was a proof of the divine *mercy* (ver. 3); while, to the third, it meant the divine ratification of both ideas—the theophanic birth of the pre-existent Christ,¹ who alike in judgment and in mercy is Immanuel, God-with-us (Matt. i. 23). Hence to affirm, as some do, that a contemporary reference to the time of Ahaz precludes all allusion to the Messianic fulfilment; or conversely, that because of this higher signification a contemporary reference is not to be admitted at all, is about equal in perverseness, and fails to do justice either to its original basis in history, or to its subsequent development in religion. The preacher, on the contrary, will prefer to view the matter from all sides—historically, prophetically, teleologically—and realise as he does so that the profound appellation given to the promised child admits, at least, of a threefold interpretation—viz., that God is with us—(1) *in judgment*, (2) *in chastisement*, (3) *in salvation*. Alike in the

¹ See Briggs, "The Study of Holy Scripture," p. 526.

discipline of history, in the purifying of the faithful remnant, and in the effecting of a world-wide redemption, the God of Israel is a covenant-keeping God : He is Immanuel, God-with-us.

3. THE STRENGTHENING OF ITS PARTICULAR NUANCE.

In at least two different ways the idea conveyed by the participle is rendered more emphatic and conspicuous. We have (1) the addition of the substantive verb **הָיָה**, and (2) an exceptional or inverted grouping of the words. It seems precarious to find in the first of these modes a sign of decadence in the language ; for while later writers use the idiom with the utmost frequency, it is not by any means uncommon or unsuitable in the earlier books. Cf. Gen. iv. 17, 1 Sam. ii. 11, with Ps. cxxii. 2. “And he *was* building a city (**בָּנָהוּ יְהוֹדָי**—*i.e.*, the city was in course of erection when the event took place), and he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.” “And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child *did minister* unto the Lord before Eli the priest”—*lit.*, *was ministering* (**הָיָה מְשַׁרֵּת**), or continued to

minister, all the time he remained at Shiloh. Similarly in Ps. cxxii. 2:—

Standing are our feet
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

—not “shall stand” (A.V.), but “are standing” (R.V.)—the toilsome pilgrimage (*cf.* Ps. lxxxiv. 5, 6) being, for the time, ended, and the pilgrims enjoying the rest and worship within the city of the great King. In addition to the substantive verb, the latter passage illustrates the second mode of giving prominence to the verbal action—viz., by an exceptional or inverted grouping of the words. As a rule the subject precedes the participle, but occasionally, for the sake of emphasis, the opposite order is adopted. Gen. xviii. 17, “Shall I *hide* from Abraham that which I do?”—הֲמִכְסֶּה אֲנִי—*i.e.*, shall anything of *concealment* characterise my dealings with Abraham, whom I have chosen as an organ of *revelation*? Or Num. xi. 29—“Art thou *jealous* for my sake?” (הֲמִקְנֵא אֶתָּה). Is it not rather *envy* for your own? No true servant of God can be jealous at such a prospect. I would have all the Lord’s people to be prophets.

Or for a practical illustration suggested by this second way of emphasising the reading, the preacher may turn to Jeremiah’s inaugural vision

(chap. i. 11-12). "Jeremiah, what *seest thou* (אַתָּה רֹאֶה)? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree (אֶשְׁקֵד). Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for *I am watching* (אֲנִי שֹׁקֵד) over My word to perform it." In this passage, both ways of grouping the words are found side by side. But what is the meaning of the instructive play upon words, שֹׁקֵד and שְׁקֵד? Canon Driver has suggested, in his note on Amos viii. 1,¹ that it may teach us something respecting the genesis and nature of visions. The thought of Jehovah's *watching* (שֹׁקֵד) produces, by association of sounds, the image of the *almond tree* (שְׁקֵד); just as the term קֵץ, an "end," brings before the prophetic gaze of Amos the picture of the basket of summer-fruit (קִרְיִץ). The connection, however, as thus traced, is too psychological for the simple rural life of Tekoa or Anathoth. It is the creation of the class-room rather than the product of the open air. No doubt a correspondence does exist between the two closely allied terms; but it is far more natural to suppose that the spiritual application was suggested by the beautiful image

¹ Cambridge Bible.

than to fall back on the assumption that an inward spiritual impulse gave birth to the striking metaphor. Verses 4-10 show us the young prophet waiting in his native village for the divine message which was to send him forth as a destroyer and builder up of nations. If we may read between the lines, it was with no small measure of impatience that he was awaiting the Divine summons. This is the meaning of his vision. Looking over one of the gardens at Anathoth, about the close of winter, his eye was arrested by one of the first, sure signs of returning Spring—the rod-like twigs of the almond tree covered with its fair white blossoms. The rest of nature seemed to be asleep; but there, true to its Hebrew name, the almond tree had *awaked* (שָׁקַד, to awake). And as he stood and gazed at the beautiful object, a voice within spake and gave him the interpretation. The awakening shrub was simply a picture of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Jehovah, the God of Israel, was waiting, watching, and ready to act, even though there was no sign among the nations of the coming political upheaval (ver. 10). This is the force of the expressive participle, “*I am watching.*” The prophet might only gaze for a moment on the beautiful flowers of the almond

tree ; but when is there an instant in the history of Israel that the God of their fathers does not watch over the fulfilment of His promise ? Hence a suitable division of the subject would be :—

- (1) A waiting prophet.
- (2) A nature-parable.
- (3) A divine worker.

“I am watching over My word to perform it.”

CHAPTER VII

THE HEBREW MOODS

THE idea of mood has been variously defined. It is the "mode" or manner in which any given action may be regarded, or the verbal form in which the mental attitude of the speaker may be expressed. The speaker can throw into his manner of address the whole weight of his subjective feelings and desires; and inasmuch as these (like everything personal) vary greatly both in degree and kind, there arises a multitude of subjective moods, differing from one another, as the feelings imparted by personal sympathy unceasingly ebb and flow. Not that any language has succeeded perfectly in coining forms of expression for all the shades of meaning suggested by these unceasing fluctuations. A great deal must be left to the intonation of the speaker, and to the character and drift of the whole discourse. As in the case of the Hebrew Tenses, so now in the treatment of the Hebrew moods, the tone of the context, and not so much the form of the

verb, is the determining factor. Cf. Amos vii. 12, where the imperfect form תִּנָּבֵא must be translated as an imperative. "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and *prophesy* there."

Even in the Semitic languages, however, we have sundry variations of the verbal form, which correspond in part to the several moods of classical Greek. In Arabic, for instance, the imperfect tense possesses no fewer than four model forms, each marked by its own termination, and serving as the indicative, subjunctive, jussive, and energetic moods, whilst the imperative has at least two distinct forms, the simple and the energetic. Thus from *qatala* (= قَتَلَ) we get as 1st pers. sing. imperfect :—

Indic.	Subj.	Jussive.	Energetic.
' <i>aqtulu</i>	' <i>aqtula</i>	' <i>aqtul</i>	' <i>aqtulan</i> (or, - <i>anna</i>)

Hebrew has not preserved so faithfully these original Semitic forms—if they really did exist in the primitive speech, from which both Arabic and Hebrew have *collaterally* descended—and yet even here there are several distinct traces of them. There is no special form for the subjunctive as distinguished from the indicative, but there are

both jussive and energetic forms; and alike in verbal inflection and in the colouring of the context, it can convey in the liveliest manner the mental attitude of the speaker, and the various shades of thought and feeling expressed by the Indo-European moods. In Chapters VIII.-X. we shall deal with three of the most important forms—viz., the imperative, the jussive, and the cohortative, but before coming to these, and in illustration of our remark that a great deal must depend on the nature of the context, the preacher will find a suggestive alteration introduced by the R.V. in Prov. i. 5.

In the A.V. the verbs are translated as simple futures—"will hear," "shall attain"—but the unity of the paragraph (vers. 2-6), which deals with the design of the whole book, is thereby broken into two. The tone of the context, no less than this unity of subject, demands another rendering of the present text; and the R.V. is undoubtedly correct in treating the various verbal forms as *subjunctive*.

*That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning ;
And that the man of understanding may attain unto
sound counsels.*

The design of the Book of Proverbs is to *teach wisdom*—i.e., the sowing of good seed into prepared soil—persuaded that where this is neglected, the

whole life is in danger of running to waste. But this means—

(1.) THE SEED OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

Cf. verses 2, 4. Instruction implies correction or discipline (LXX παιδεία); for, as Trench remarks in his *Synonyms*, “all effectual instruction for the sinful children of men includes and implies chastening, or, as we are accustomed to say, out of a sense of the same truth, ‘correction.’”¹ How important then must early husbandry be! The sooner it is commenced, the less the element of correction will be required.

(2.) THE SEED OF PRACTICAL EFFICIENCY FOR
THE WISE

Cf. especially “wise dealing” (ver. 3), and “sound counsels” (ver. 5). The Hebrew word for “counsels” has reference to the right steering of a ship (from חָבַל, a rope, *cf.* חָבֵל, a sailor—i.e., a rope-puller)—an allusion which is preserved in the LXX κυβέρνησιν, and in the Vulgate gubernacula: and may be interpreted as “skill and facility in the management of life” (Lange). Consequently, in the second half of verse 3 it consists of righteousness, judgment, and equity. *Righteousness*, the inner principle that regulates

¹ *New Testament Synonyms*, p. 105.

the whole course of action, *judgment*, the same principle embodied in actual life, and *equity* (or plur. *equities*), the same principle wrought out in particular cases.

(3.) THE SEED OF SUBTILTY FOR THE SIMPLE

Ver. 4. This is the flower of the other two, for both words are here used in a good sense. The *simple* are the single-hearted, not double-minded (James i. 8), those without fold in their character, the sincere or transparent, like Nathanael, in whom there was "no guile." Still, if such are not to be taken advantage of by an unscrupulous world, they need the wisdom of the serpent no less than the harmlessness of the dove—*i.e.*, *subtilty*. In fine, they are to follow the example, not of Nathanael, but of Nathanael's Lord—the *Lamb* of God, and yet the *Lion* of the tribe of Judah.

CHAPTER VIII

THE IMPERATIVE

THE action, in this case, is not stated simply, as in the indicative, but brought immediately before a second person in the form of a command or request. And since the personal suffix is not always needed in so direct and personal a statement, it is dropped altogether or reduced to the shortest possible form. Like the vocative in the noun, the imperative is the most curt and abrupt mood in the conjugation of the verb; and assuming as it does the character of a mere exclamation, it is found almost always at the beginning of the clause, as לֵךְ אִמֶּר—“*Go say* to them, Return ye to your tents” (Deut. v. 27). It is the briefest and most emphatic expression of the desire of the speaker that something should be done. In the suggestive terminology of Ewald, it is “the highest degree of the voluntative.”

1. THE SIMPLE IMPERATIVE.

Viewed in this way, there are two main uses of the simple imperative that are full of interest

to the expositor. (1) In animated descriptions of the future it is an appropriate and subjective expression of the certainty of the event. The speaker, in other words, moves forward in thought to the scene itself, and beholding the stirring events evolving before his eyes, he addresses himself to the actors ideally present in the abrupt, impassioned accents of command. *Cf.* Ps. cx. 2:—

The Lord shall send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion :

Rule thou (רָרָה) in the midst of thine enemies.

Standing in thought at the actual moment of fulfilment, and vividly realising the nature of the divine interposition, the Psalmist calls upon the theocratic king to assume his sovereignty, and fearlessly to exercise his power. Similarly in Isaiah's promise to King Hezekiah that the dreaded advance of Sennacherib would not be permitted to endanger Jerusalem. "This shall be a sign unto thee : ye shall eat this year that which groweth of itself, and in the second year that which springeth of the same ; and in the third year"—as if the fulness had already come, and the prophet were standing in Spring-time beside the bursting sacks of the sower—" *Sow ye, and reap* : for thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria . . . by the way that

he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come into this city, saith the Lord" (Isa. xxxvii. 30 ff.). Even in a statement like Job v. 22, the same expressive idiom ought to be admitted. The phrase employed by the poet is really a *command* (אֶל-הַיִּירָא); and though one may feel, at first, that it is somewhat out of place in this passage, being nothing more than the nervous and energetic expression of what in prose would be, "thou needest not be afraid," we have only to suppose that Eliphaz, in his picture of the righteous man, has moved forward in spirit to the depicted scene, to realise that the idea of command is no more inappropriate here than in the instances already adduced—"Of the beasts of the field, *be not thou afraid.*" It is the graphic use of the simple imperative interjected in animated descriptions of the future. See also 1 Sam. x. 7, Isa. lxxv. 18.

(2) A second usage which ought not to be overlooked by the careful student is the case of two imperatives standing in the same construction and connected by the simple conjunctive *vav*. In this formula, according to the generally accepted view, the first imperative expresses an act or condition which carries with it the second as a consequence. It is an idiom which represents in the briefest possible form the syntactical

relations of conditional or consequential propositions. Gen. xlii. 18—" *This do, and live.*" The living is dependent on the doing; and therefore the English rendering may be replaced by either of the following—"do this *that* ye may live," or "*if* ye do this, ye shall live,"—*i.e.*, we have a final, conditional, or hypothetical imperative. And doubtless in many of the instances, where this pregnant formula is employed, the explanation, as thus given, is sufficiently exhaustive. 2 Kings v. 13, "Wash and become clean." Jer. xxvii. 12, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon . . . *and live,*"—*i.e.*, serve him, *that* you may live, or, *if* you serve him and his people, ye shall live.

It may be questioned, however, whether this supplies in every instance the full force of the Hebrew original. In Gen. xii. 2, for example, where we have a closely allied use of the imperative, it is not enough to say with the A.V. "I will bless thee . . . and *thou shalt be* a blessing." The mood of command suggests another idea—not the mere promise of blessing associated with the election of Abraham, but the need of *human co-operation*—the solemn obligation laid upon Abraham and his seed, that they should realise the greatness of their calling, and consciously yield themselves as a means of blessing to all

the families of the earth. Hence the R.V. renders, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and *be thou* a blessing." It is a similar blending of the divine and human factors that is set forth in many of the passages where the double imperative is used. Isa. xlv. 22, "Look unto Me, and *be ye saved*;" lv. 2, "Hearken unto Me, and *eat ye that which is good*," and especially Amos v. 4, not, "seek ye Me, and ye shall live" (R.V.), nor, "seek ye Me, that ye may live" (*i.e.*, לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶיךָ, ver. 14), but, "seek ye Me and *live*"—the second imperative being the expression of a profound moral obligation, what Amos, the herdman of Tekoa would call, not ritual but *justice*. "Seek ye Me (spiritually) and live (righteously)." Both are needed. Both are theocratic obligations—paramount and indispensable. Let the people turn to Jehovah, the God of Israel, and not to Bethel (vers. 5, 6); and then let them purge their civic life, and show kindness to the poor; for God and moral good are one, righteousness is the alone essential thing in the world. Hence a suitable line of thought is suggested for the preacher. The elements of true religion are mainly these two—worship and justice.

- (1) The worship, or spiritual seeking, that finds a God.

- (2) The moral rectitude and civic justice, that alone can vindicate the worship.

"Thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, *Seek ye Me, and live.*"

2. THE ENERGETIC IMPERATIVE

Besides the simple imperative, we have another or emphatic form of the mood, which brings out with additional clearness the subjective attitude of the speaker. In at least three different ways this strengthening of the verbal action is attempted.

(*α*) By the insertion of the *nun energicum* between the verb and the pronominal suffix. This is the epenthetic nun, having demonstrative force, and is more common with the imperfect tense than with any form of the imperative. For the imperative, however, we have passages like Job v. 27, Jer. xxxvi. 15, and especially 1 Sam. xxi. 10, where David said to the priest of Nob, referring to the sword of Goliath, "There is none like that ; *give it me*" (תִּנֶּנָּה).

(*β*) Still greater emphasis may be impressed upon the words by the addition of the precative particle נָ, which is variously rendered in English, as, "Tell me, *I pray thee*" (Gen. xxiv.

23), or, as adding a rare touch of admonition to a much explained text, "Come *now*, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. i. 18).

(γ) Probably, however, the commonest way of strengthening the verbal idea is by the addition of the paragogic or cohortative ending הַֿ, as שְׁמְרָה, "O keep" (Ps. xxv. 20), or the earnest appeal of Ps. xxxv. 2:—

"Take hold of shield and buckler,

And *stand up* (קוּמָה) for mine help."

Originally it expressed some subjective emphasis on the part of the speaker; though Prof. Davidson thinks that in passages like Judges ix. 8, 14, and 1 Sam. ix. 23, it is difficult to detect any essential difference between the two forms in usage. Still in both of these passages a real difference may be felt. In Jotham's parable to the men of Shechem, the trees said unto the olive tree, "*Reign thou* (מִלְכָּה) over us," but in verse 14, "Come thou and *reign* (מִלְכָּךְ) over us." Here the two forms are found side by side; and yet the latter or simple form being preceded by a second imperative and the emphatic pronoun "thou"—לֵךְ אַתָּה מִלְכָּךְ—gives a sufficient strengthening to the oft-repeated request without the addition of the paragogic הַֿ. And in a similar

manner with 1 Sam. ix. 23, Samuel said unto the cook, “*Bring* (תִּנֶּה) the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, *Set* (שֵׁים) it by thee.” The former imperative is much more direct than the latter; the latter, indeed, occurring in what is virtually indirect speech. And if it be granted that “the extended form seems more courteous than the abrupt, shorter form,” the interchange in this verse is just what might have been expected.

In seeking the origin of these energetic expressions, scholars are probably correct in bringing them into comparison with the energetic mood in Arabic, as seen in the forms already quoted, *'aqtulan* or *-anna*. They are simply variations of the demonstrative *n*, which occupies so prominent a place in the formation of pronouns and other demonstratives, as הֵן, הִנֵּה, and the like.¹ Even the cohortative הִנֵּה and the precative particle נָא may easily be recognised in the strong Arabic termination *-anna*. Cf. אֶבְחַרְהֶנָּא, “Let me now choose” (2 Sam. xvii. 1), or נָא הוֹשִׁיעָה, “save, I beseech thee,”—i.e., *Hosanna* (Ps. cxviii. 25). Whether Hebrew possesses the

¹ Wright, “Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages,” p. 193.

original forms, and Arabic discloses the fulness of a later development, or Arabic preserves the more primitive idioms, of which Hebrew retains no more than the merest detritus or fragments, is a question that is still open to discussion. The probability is that neither the Hebraic nor the Arabic forms are the unimpaired survivals of early Semitic practice. They are the collateral adaptations and variations of a common aboriginal type. Alike by the insertion of consonants and the use of strengthening particles and terminations, they have sought to emphasise the mental attitude of the speaker by giving a more adequate expression to the urgency of his appeal.

3. THE NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE

As already indicated, the element of courtesy may have been another influence in the moulding of these expressions—the short, abrupt mood not being considered sufficiently becoming in the framing of so personal and pointed an address. And doubtless the same feeling contributed, in some degree, to the production of a second idiom, to which, under a closing paragraph, some necessary allusion may be made. Anything of the nature of a *negative* entreaty or command is to be expressed, not by the imperative or abrupt mood, but by the appro-

priate forms of the voluntative. And these cohortative or jussive forms may be of any person or number, as Ps. xxv. 2, "Let me not be ashamed" (אַל-אֲבוֹשָׁה). The student, in this connection, must carefully distinguish between the two negatives אַל and לֹא. As an adverb of negation, the former denies, not objectively as a *fact* (like לֹא = οὐ), but subjectively as a *wish* (like μή). Hence while לֹא appears generally in negative *commands*, as in the Decalogue (Ex. xx.), אַל is more usually employed to express *dissuasion* or *deprecation*. Jer. iv. 3, "Break up your fallow ground, and *sow not* (אַל-תִּזְרַעוּ) among thorns"; or Ps. xli. 3 (Heb.), which the expositor will find a most interesting passage in the practical work of preaching.

Rendered in the A.V., it is brought into line with the preceding context and read as a simple prediction, "Thou *wilt not deliver* him unto the will of his enemies." The adverb אַל, however, cannot thus stand in simple declarative clauses. It denotes a negative wish, and must be translated as in the R.V., "*deliver not thou him*" (אַל-תִּתְּנֵהוּ). No doubt a certain abruptness or lack of continuity seems to be introduced by this mode of expression; and in order to obviate

the difficulty a certain latitude is conceded after all to this adverb of negation. It is suggested that **לֹא** may occasionally occur in mere predictive sentences, though even in that case it always expresses a more hearty sympathy on the part of the speaker. But when, from the analogy of the imperative, one speaks of the jussive as issuing a command, and not simply a negative wish, he unnecessarily aggravates the difficulty in this particular passage. What if the suffix in **הַתְּנַהֵר** refers, not so much to the compassionate man, of whom the poet has been speaking, as to the Psalmist himself, who in the day of his distress was hungering for sympathy, both human and divine? Would not this justify the passing of the language of prediction into the language of prayer? The change, as thus desiderated, is the key to the whole subject.

The poet, in verse 2, enunciates the general principle under which all individual cases are to be brought:—

Blessed is he that considereth the poor ;
The Lord will deliver him in the day of evil.

But now, as he lingers fondly over the various elements in the blessedness—how God would keep him alive, prosper him in the land, and deliver him from all his fears—these different ideas react

upon himself, and find a suitable expression in the language of intercession. This is the reason why the verbal forms are ambiguous, and why even the R.V. is not able to determine whether the Psalmist is simply stating facts, or proffering an earnest prayer in his own behalf (see margin to ver. 3). His language is ambiguous, because he is trying to express two different ideas. And would that all our meditation in divine things were characterised by the same far-reaching ambiguity, that every time we muse upon God's gracious dealings with His people the prayer might spring to our lips unbidden, "May the same divine favour descend upon me." For the main element in the blessedness has yet to be noted. If the statement of fact (or promise) is made the basis of intercession, this in turn passes into the language of *assurance* (ver. 4). The Hebrew tense (הִפְכָּתִי) is best understood as a perfect of certitude, and pictures the desired result as already attained. As in Ps. vi. 8,¹ the dark prison walls of trial are not yet broken down, but a great confidence, begotten by the Spirit of God, has visited this man's soul, and he knows, as by the certainty of a divine inspiration, that the hour of his deliverance has at last struck. Our

¹ Page 62.

subject, then, is The Beatitude of the Compassionate Man, and these are its natural divisions.

- (1) *His compassion*, or a heaven-taught consideration for the poor (ver. 2^a).
- (2) *His blessedness*, or the receiving from Jehovah, in no stint measure, the same treatment which he has tried to mete out to others. He visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction; and now, in the day of his distress, a divine visitor comforts and inspires him (ver. 4).
- (3) *The personal application*, or the passing of prediction into prayer (ver. 3^e), until in the rapture of assured faith he can sing, like the writer of the first penitential Psalm, "The Lord *hath heard* the voice of my weeping."

CHAPTER IX

THE JUSSIVE

By the Jussive is meant a modified or shortened form of the Imperfect. Instead of the normal **יִרְאֶה**, "the Lord *will provide*" (Gen. xxii. 8), we have in chap. xli. 33 the apocopated form **יִרְא** (in common editions, **יִרְאֵ**), "let Pharaoh *look out* a man, and set him over the land of Egypt." Similarly in place of the Hiphil **יִקְוֶה**, "the Lord *will raise up* a prophet like unto me" (Deut. xviii. 15), we find in 1 Sam. i. 23 the modified form **יִקְוֶה**, "the Lord *establish* His word": just as in Arabic the indicative *yaqtulu* becomes, in the jussive, *yaqtul*. It is no exception to this rule to find the unmodified forms occasionally used where the abbreviated or jussive forms might have been expected. Rhythm no less than logic may have required the heavier term in order to give distinction to the reading. Cf. Job iii. 9 (**אֶל־יִרְאֶה**) with xx. 17 (**אֶל־יִרְאֵ**).

The two passages are not by any means identical. The Masoretes felt the difference so acutely that while they marked the former with a disjunctive accent (R'bhia mugrash), they allowed the latter to appear with a conjunctive accent (the servant Mer'kha). What was the difference between the two? In the former passage the weight of the reading falls on the *subject* of the verb—the night which proclaimed the patriarch's birth—and therefore with the dichotomy impressed upon *it*, he exclaims, “*Let it not behold* (or refresh itself with) the eyelids of the morning.” In the latter, however, the main emphasis rests on the *object* of the verb—the various tokens of the divine favour which ought not to be conferred on the evil-doer—“*Let him not look upon the rivers, the flowing streams of honey and butter.*” It was more than euphony then that led to the retention of the unmodified imperfect. It was euphony that reflected thought.

The origin of the apocopated form has been sought in various directions. In all probability it is to be traced to the cognate forms of the imperative. It would arise naturally in the hurried pronunciation of a person issuing a command. And yet the term, as thus defined, is not in any sense exhaustive. It obscures as much as it illumines. Not in commands alone, but in the

more general nuance of *desire* and *will*—in the optative no less than in the imperative, and in the voluntative no less than in the optative—the shortened forms of the jussive mood indicate the quickened utterance of the speaker. Gen. xxxi. 49, “Jehovah *watch* (יִצָּף) between me and thee!” Job xiii. 27, “Wherefore hidest thou thy face? . . . that thou writest bitter things against me, and *puttest* (וּתַשֵּׁם) my feet also in the stocks”—*i.e.*, *deliberately* or *intentionally* puttest my feet in the stocks—a far more lively image than the mere statement of a fact. It is the graphic delineation of the mental attitude of the subject, and is therefore rightly classed under a wider application of the voluntative. We may look at each of these three nuances in turn.

1. THE JUSSIVE AS AN IMPERATIVE

It is mainly in negative sentences, and particularly in the second person, that the modified or jussive forms are used in the sense of *command* (Deut. iii. 26, Job v. 22). In any other expression the idea of command tends more and more to shade off into the meaning of *admonition*. Hos. iv. 4, “*Let none find fault, and none upbraid; for thy people have rebelled against me.*”¹ In

¹ Cf. Robertson Smith, “Prophets of Israel,” p. 408.

verse 15 the two senses are found side by side. "Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet *let not* Judah offend (אלֹא־יִשְׂרָאֵל); and come not ye (וְאַל־תֵּבֹאוּ) unto Gilgal . . . nor swear, As the Lord liveth." See also Job xvi. 18.

The element of courtesy, as previously suggested, may have been the determining influence in moulding these expressions. It seemed more respectful to address a second person in this particular way than in the abrupt terms of the imperative. And even in the absence of the negative אֵל the speaker was occasionally led to a somewhat similar idiom by the innate delicacy of his thinking. Cf. Ps. lxxi. 21, where the jussive forms are used in preference to a direct command in the language of intercession. And 1 Sam. x. 8, in which Samuel said unto Saul, "Seven days *thou shalt wait* (תִּנְחַל), till I come unto thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do." The sense is not that Saul had to do this thing whether he desired it or not, but rather that Samuel wished him to do it, and expressed the hope that he would accede to this proposal, that it might be well with him on the day appointed, when the prophet himself should draw near to sacrifice unto the Lord in Gilgal. Even in this case the verbal expression is not necessarily a

direct command. It is one that easily passes over into the language of admonition. Accordingly, while the precise shade of meaning is slightly different from the force associated with a direct prohibition, the jussive form is used all the same to give urgency to the seer's advice. In both instances a jussive of the second person is employed without the preceding adverb of negation, but there is nothing peculiar or anomalous in its usage. It is a legitimate adaptation of the modified imperfect to denote the mental attitude of the speaker ; and as such it is a worthy and adequate rendering of the thought.

Closely allied to this idiom is the use of the jussive after לֹא. Gen. xxiv. 8, "*Only thou shalt not bring (לֹא תָבִיב) my son thither again.*" This is so much more courteous, because less pointed, than the direct command, אַל-תָּבִיב, that the interchange of the negative adverbs is entirely justified. The statement is still admonitory, and therefore jussive in the highest degree, but it is not necessarily a naked prohibition in the sense of an unqualified command. Cf. also 1 Sam. xiv. 36, and especially 1 Kings ii. 6 : "*Do therefore (וְעָשִׂיתָ) according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to Sheol in peace (וְלֹא-תוֹרֵד).*"

Truly a grim command as rendered in the English version! But is it justified? Surely if a direct and pointed command had been the intention of the writer, he could have used the imperative in the first clause (not *vav* perfect) and לֵךְ with the jussive in the second. We need not make a rough age rougher still by forcing a harsh, abrupt meaning into words that may easily convey a softer implication. "Thou knowest what Joab did unto me. . . . *Thou wilt* therefore *do* according to thy wisdom, and *thou wilt not cause* his hoar head to go down to Sheol in peace." No doubt it breathed vengeance against the man who had slain Abner, the son of Ner, but the king did not express this fact in the cold, ruthless way suggested by the English version. It was a darkly veiled admonition which had taken the place of a positive command.

2. THE JUSSIVE AS AN OPTATIVE

Not more clearly has the idea of command passed over into the nuance of admonition than does the latter, in turn, assume the meaning of entreaty, request, or wish. In prayer, for example, the right form of address is neither injunction nor admonition, but the submissive and deferential accents of desire. Addressed to an inferior, the

verbal form might easily convey the meaning of an emphatic mandate; but to a superior, and most of all to the Deity, it passes into the language of appeal. Gen. xviii. 30, "*Oh let not the Lord be angry*" (אַל-נָא יַחַר); 1 Kings xvii. 21, "*May the soul of this child return*" (תָּשׁוּבָנָא); and for the preacher Ps. cxxi. 3, as rendered in the margin of the R.V.:—

אַל-יִתֵּן לְמוֹט רַגְלֶךָ

"*Let him not suffer thy foot to be moved.*"

Thus interpreted, the jussive becomes the link by which the entire psalm is bound into an expressive unity. The personal conviction in verse 2 is made the basis of an earnest entreaty for a fuller realisation of Jehovah's keeping (ver. 3); until rising on the wings of heartfelt desire, the singer passes, in verses 4-8, into the spirit-taught language of assurance. Conviction — prayer — assurance: the אַל of verse 3 has become in verse 4 the לָא of fully realised fact:—

Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

— לָא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן.

In a passage like Job xiii. 5, we have the intro-

duction of another idiom which is full of interest to the expositor:—

Oh that ye would hold your peace !

That it might be (וְתָהִי) to you for wisdom.

In addition to the optative, מִיִּיְיָ, *Oh that*, we have the use of *jussive with light vav*, to indicate the connection of the second stichos. This construction is of very frequent occurrence in Biblical Hebrew; and the preacher who is sufficiently attentive to its ever-varying light and shade will be richly rewarded for all the labour he expends in the elucidation of the text. After an imperative or anything with imperative force, or after any form of expression suggestive of a wish or hope, the jussive (or cohortative) with light vav will be found in a great variety of passages to denote the closely allied nuances of design, purpose, and even effect. Gen. xxvii. 4, “Bring to me, *that I may eat*” (וְאֵכְלָה). Isa. lv. 3, “Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: *that I may make an everlasting covenant with you*” (וְאֶכְרַתָּהּ), like the ὁπως ἄν of Acts iii. 19—“Repent ye . . . that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord”); or Hos. ii. 4 (Heb.), “Plead with your mother, plead . . . and let her

put away (better, *that she may put away*) her whoredoms from her face . . . lest I set her as in the day that she was born, and slay her with thirst."

The idea of *design* expressed by this construction has been illustrated by its interchange with the infinitive and ל. Cf. 1 Kings xii. 6 with verse 9. Rehoboam asked the old men, saying, "What counsel give ye me *to return* answer to this people?" (לְהָשִׁיב). But to the young men he said, "What counsel give ye, that we may return answer, etc." (וְנָשִׁיב). The two passages are not exactly parallel. Rehoboam's desire to associate himself with the younger men, with whom he had grown up, very naturally suggested the pronoun *we* for the latter passage; just as in chap. xxii. 7, Jehoshaphat said to Ahab, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that *we* might inquire of him (וְנִדְרָשָׁה)?"—whereas in verse 8 the King of Israel answered, "There is yet one man *to inquire* of the Lord (לְדַרֵּשׁ)"—a very different statement; for Ahab had no wish to be associated in the business at all. Design or purpose may have been expressed by both forms of the verb, but they are not to be regarded, on that account, as used indiscriminately.

For a practical illustration of this expressive idiom the preacher may turn to **יִיכָה** in Job xvi. 21. Instead of an indefinite expression of the afflicted man's longing—"O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!" (A.V.), the Revisers interpret it as the *design* of the preceding act—the definite form and substance of the patriarch's prayer, "Mine eye poureth out tears unto God, *that He would maintain, etc.*" A brief paraphrase of the immediate context will indicate the character of this appeal. Beginning at verse 9, we have a graphic picture of the persecution, divine and human, to which the patriarch had been subjected. His adversary had gnashed upon him with his teeth, sharpened his eyes upon him, taken him by the neck and dashed him to pieces, and broken him with breach upon breach. Hence his face was red with weeping, and on his eyelids was the shadow of death. And yet in all this he was suffering wrongfully. He was no more deserving of this cruel treatment than the righteous Abel, whose blood called for vengeance on the sullen fratricide Cain. That insistent cry (ver. 18) would not be disregarded. "Even now my witness is in heaven, and He that voucheth for me is on high." Friends might deride and

persecute him as God (*cf.* xix. 22) ; but his blood-avenger, his divine *goel*, would listen to his cry and deliver him from the archers who were arrayed against him (so Cheyne, who reads גִּבְלִי instead of עֵינִי in ver. 20^b). In other words, the surprising idea which comforted him in xiv. 13-15, has again flashed forth like a star to illumine his darkness. The *Wrath* of God might be hurrying him to Sheol, but the *Love* of God, which longed to triumph over judgment, was ready to espouse his cause and vindicate his innocence ; and, therefore, appealing from the one to the other, from the *Wrath* to the *Love*, he prays (1) that He would maintain his right with God ; and (2) defend him from the aspersions of his fellows. The subject, then, is *the martyr's vindication*, and these are its three natural divisions :—

(a) His martyrdom (ver. 18).

(β) His avenger (ver. 19).

(γ) His prayer (ver. 21).

“That He would maintain the right of a man with God,
And of a son of man with his neighbour.”

And all this here, and now :—

“For when a few years are come,
I shall go the way whence I shall not return.”

3. THE JUSSIVE AS A VOLUNTATIVE

Under this division we may glance at a few of the passages in which the use of the jussive is felt to be anomalous. The language used is imperative or optative, but the context seems to demand nothing more than the mere statement of a fact. If the form be jussive, the sense is indicative: and therefore at this point, as we are often reminded, we have a wide and legitimate field for textual emendation. The forms used are יִקְטִל and יִקְטִלְ —i.e., the jussive *without* or *with* simple vav; yet since they appear to be employed in the sense of the ordinary imperfect, they ought to be emended into יִקְטִיל and יִקְטִילְ , or even into the corresponding forms with vav consecutive. Cf. Isa. lxiii. 3, where the jussive $\text{וַיִּזְ$ must be pointed as the indicative וַיִּזְ , “their lifeblood *is sprinkled* upon my garments.” Yet, on the assumption that the margin of the R.V. gives an equally admissible rendering of the whole paragraph, the jussive form may be retained after all, and is no less instructive in its imagery, “I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; yea, *let* their lifeblood *bespatter*

all my garments, for I will stain all my raiment.”¹

It may seem a waste of ingenuity to try and fit some known jussive sense on every case as it arises in the work of exposition; but it is not necessarily so. And in all fairness the attempt ought to be made before resorting to the drastic method of textual emendation. Cf. Ps. lxxxv. 14. There is no necessity for rendering יֵשׁׁ as an ordinary future—pointing it יֵשׁׁ (defective for יֵשׁׁים)—and translating as the R.V.:—

Righteousness shall go before him ;
And shall set (us) in the way of his steps.

The jussive “*let it set*” is no less expressive in its symbolism. Some would even carry the jussive sense back to the first line in the parallelism, and read, “Let justice go before him, etc. ;” but this is no improvement on the deep spirituality of its teaching. Whether the verse is to be sung by the priests alone, or by the whole choir, they are fully assured that righteousness, as a herald, *shall go* before Jehovah ; it is only when they come to the second thought—the following of the divine footsteps on the part of Israel—that they instinctively pass into prayer.

¹ Or see below, pp. 164–168.

In regard to other passages, the whole question turns on what is meant by "some known jussive sense." Probably our definition of the term "jussive" is too narrow to begin with. As distinguished from the cohortative—*e.g.*, which is defined as expressing the desire, will, and *intention* of the speaker, when he himself is the subject of the action, is it enough to say that the jussive expresses the speaker's desire, will, and *command* when others are the subject of the verb? May it not be possible that like the cohortative, though in the second and third persons, the jussive can express the deliberate *intention* of the subject, whether it be in the intensity of his mental attitude, or in the intentional and premeditated character of his action? In short, that at times it denotes no more than the general idea of the voluntative. *Cf.* Job xiii. 27 (quoted above) and xxxiv. 37. In the latter passage there is no need to point simple vav as vav consecutive. It makes good enough sense to say:—

For he addeth rebellion unto his sin,
He clappeth his hands among us,
Yea, he deliberately multiplieth his words against God.

This is something more than the bare statement of a fact: it is the delineation of a mental

attitude. Cf. also וַיִּסְתֵּר in Micah iii. 4. The R.V. renders, "Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but He will not answer them: yea, *He will hide His face*" from those ruthless spoilers of His people. But it would be equally fitting to render, "let Him hide," or "He will intentionally hide," His face from those robbers, a sentiment which, on the lips of Micah, the peasant-prophet from Moresheth-Gath, is exceedingly graphic and life-like.

As a practical illustration of this usage, the preacher may turn to Isa. lviii. 10:—

וְתִפֹּק לָרֶעִב נַפְשְׁךָ וְנֶפֶשׁ גֵּעֲנָה
תִּשְׂבֶּיֶע וְזָרַח׃

The R.V., like the LXX, renders the first two verbs as the continuation of אִסְתָּסִיר in verse 9—*i.e.*, as subjunctive. "*If thou take away the yoke . . . and bestow on the hungry thy bread (reading לַחֲמֶךָ instead of נַפְשְׁךָ with Cheyne, etc.), and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light arise in darkness, and thine obscurity be as the noonday.*" This, however, would seem to require two ordinary imperfects in verse 10, like תִּסְרִי in verse 9, or two modified forms, like תִּפֹּק. The

similarity in sense would naturally suggest a similarity in form. Still the difficulty, as thus expressed, may not be so serious as it looks. On the assumption that both verbs *are* subjunctive, the extended form תִּשְׁבִּיץ might still be explained, both by its distance from the simple vav, and the weight of the disjunctive accent. In view of these considerations the rendering of the Greek and English may easily be accepted. On the other hand, a suggestive remark by Canon Driver is not to be overlooked, that the sequence of thought in this passage is in several respects unique, and has been passed over too lightly by the commentators.¹ A closer attention to the Masoretic pointing suggests a truer appreciation of the present jussive form, and a deeper insight into the syntactical evolution of the thought. Translate the initial תִּשְׁבִּיץ as a true subjunctive or voluntative in the sense indicated above; but begin the apodosis with the second clause by translating תִּשְׁבִּיץ as an ordinary future. In this way we conserve the normal pointing of both forms, and give a deeper and more suggestive turn to the teaching: "If thou take away the yoke . . . and *intentionally* or *voluntarily* furnish thy bread for the hungry; *then shalt*

¹ Hebrew Tenses, p. 194.

thou satisfy the afflicted soul, and (as for thyself) thy light *shall arise* in darkness, and thine obscurity be as the noonday,"—*i.e.*, a voluntary duty and a twofold reward. In fine, blessed is he that considereth the poor, for (1) he shall have the satisfaction of knowing that his practical beneficence has really blessed and benefited his brother-man, and (2) this shall be as the flashing forth of heaven's own light on his own path and problems, for he who is helping to lift the burdens of humanity is helping to remove his own. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

CHAPTER X

THE COHORTATIVE

As a rule, the jussive or shortened form of the imperfect is confined to the second or third persons. Only in a few instances is it found with the *first*, as **וְלֹא-נִשְׂאָר** (1 Sam. xiv. 36), or **וְלֹא-אָט** (Job xxiii. 11). Instead of this latter construction, we have the more usual form of the cohortative. This is formed, not by apocopation, but by adding the termination **ה־** to the ordinary form of the imperfect, as **אֲשִׁירָה**, "Let me sing" (Isa. v. 1). To balance, however, the few passages where the jussive appears with the *first* person, sundry cases are referred to, in which the cohortative is used with the *third* (cf. Isa. v. 19, Ps. xx. 4). The termination **ה־** in the second passage may be explained by the following *Maqqeph*. The examples on either side are not numerous, but they may be sufficient to suggest that the

two modified forms of the imperfect are not so widely differentiated as might be assumed. If the imperative be the fundamental idea of the first, and the intentional the main characteristic of the second, they constantly tend to approximate the one to the other, in the ever varying applications of their usage. In other words, if the jussive is found to pass through the three stages of the imperative, optative, and intentional, a similar development, though in inverse order, may be found to characterise the cohortative. In fine, both forms are rightly included under the more general designation of the voluntative.

1. THE COHORTATIVE AS INTENTIONAL

In this sense, it indicates the will or intention of the speaker in reference to his own action. He is moved by a strongly felt inclination or impulse, and if he possesses the power to carry his desire into execution, we may translate the verbal form by *I will*, or less strongly, *I would*. So Gen. xviii. 21, "*I will go down now, and see*;" or Ex. iii. 3, "*I will turn aside now, and see why the bush is not burned*" (אֶסְרְהֶנָּה). Cf., however, Deut. xii. 20, where the people are not necessarily able to carry out their own in-

tention or desire. Not "I *will* eat" (R.V.), but "I *would* eat," or "*let me* eat, flesh"; just as in chap. xvii. 14, "I *would* set," or, "let me set a king over me." Similarly in Isa. v. 1, we may render אָשִׁירָה "I will sing," or "let me sing"—the translation expressing, in either case, the resolution or intention of the speaker to celebrate the praise of his beloved, touching his vineyard.

As a practical illustration of this particular nuance, the expositor may turn to Hos. vi. 3. Not "then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (A.V.); but, as continuing the exhortation of verse 1—"And *let us know, let us follow on* to know the Lord; His going forth is sure as the morning" (R.V.). It professes to be an earnest resolution or intention on the part of Israel to turn to Jehovah the God of their fathers: and thus understood, it is beautifully paraphrased for all time in the sacred hymnody of the Church (see Paraphrase xxx.). The context, however, both in thought and language, points clearly to a different conclusion. They had a vivid enough sense of being under divine discipline; but they had no appreciation of the moral malady that had made so drastic a measure necessary. In chap. v. 15, Jehovah said, "I will go, and return to My place, *till they feel their guilt*,

and seek My face: in their affliction they will seek Me soon enough." And yet even while they felt the severity of the discipline, they had no adequate conception of the gravity of the sin. They therefore adopted the easy confidence of the superficial, saying, "As soon as we seek Him, we shall find Him." This is the luminous emendation of the second clause suggested by Wellhausen. He arranges the consonants thus:—

נִשְׁחַרְנוּ בֵּן נִמְצָאָהוּ

In truth, not more confidently did the farmer look for the former and latter rain, at the autumnal and vernal equinoxes, than did Israel, that easily moved people, look to, and depend upon, Jehovah. "He hath torn," they said, "but He will heal us; *He may smite*,¹ but He will bind us up" (ver. 1). A beautiful and naïve confidence, and well worthy of the object to which it was directed, if only it had been securely rooted in piety and righteousness. Otherwise, it was the merest vanity and superstition. Consequently in verse 4, Jehovah received their professed penitence with impatience and disapproval. "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee?" "What other means can possibly

¹ The jussive נִשְׁחַרְנוּ. It is not necessary to read נִשְׁחַרְנוּ as if it were a perfect like "He hath torn."

be employed to move thee to a serious repentance?" Their temporary contrition was both ardent and artless; but it did not touch the springs of moral thinking and life. Hence, even their goodness (חֶסֶד), which ought to have been a reflection of the divine, was fit only to be rejected. The subject then is *superficial repentance*; and a suitable line of exposition is immediately suggested. It is not enough that penitence be

- (1) Emotionally strong (*cf.* the cohortatives).
- (2) Theologically accurate (*cf.* especially ver. 1, God hath torn, and He alone can heal).

It must also be—

- (3) Morally sound and spiritually effective; or it is nothing better than the evanescent dew that disappears in the heat of the sun.

2. THE COHORTATIVE AS OPTATIVE

When the speaker, instead of being able to carry out his own determination, is dependent for its execution on the help of others, his form of address will naturally assume a more restricted signification, and be appropriately rendered as a request or wish. Gen. i. 5, "*Let me go*, I pray thee, and bury my father;" better, "Let me go

. . . *that I may bury my father;*" for in addition to the strongly expressed wish, there is the instructive idiom of the voluntative with light vav (וְאֶקְבֵּרָה), which, as in the case of the closely allied jussive, indicates the design or purpose of the preceding act. Thus in 2 Sam. iii. 21. Not, "I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my Lord the King;" but, "*Let me arise, that I may go and gather;*" for it is immediately added that "David sent Abner away; and he went in peace." In like manner, Esau said unto Jacob, "Let us take our journey, that we may go, and let me go before thee" (Gen. xxxiii. 12).

Passages like Isa. i. 24, Gen. xxiv. 57, and Ps. xxvi. 6 are somewhat different. The first verb being an ordinary imperfect, the voluntative with vav need not be regarded as cohortative at all. "I will ease me of mine adversaries, *so will I avenge* me of mine enemies." "We will call the damsel, *that we may inquire* at her mouth."

I will wash mine hands in innocency;
So will I compass thine altar, O Lord.

Under the optative use of the cohortative, the preacher will find an interesting example at Ps. xvii. 15:—

As for me, in righteousness *let me behold* thy face;
Let me be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

The emphatic pronoun **אֲנִי**, marked by a disjunctive accent, forms a most suitable starting-point for the whole. It compares the low, sensuous desires of the *Weltmenschen* (ver. 14) with the pure, spiritual aspirations of the Psalmist. Men of the world may be satisfied if they behold their likeness reflected in their children ; but nothing less than the sight of the form of God (*cf.* Num. xii. 8 ; John xiv. 8) will satisfy the man of the spirit. How is this to be attained ? Verse 15 suggests a threefold answer :—

1. *By spiritual communion* even here (ver. 15^a)—*i.e.*, the paramount claims of *righteousness* (**בְּצִדְקָה**) and the no less indispensable requirements of *worship* ; for as Duhm remarks, “To behold the face of God” means, in general, to betake oneself to the Temple, and there seems no good reason for excluding that reference here.

2. *By beatific vision* hereafter (15^b) : for as Dr. Maclaren has added, “It is difficult to find a worthy meaning for ‘when I awake,’ unless it be from the sleep of death. Possibly, too, the allusion to the men of the world as ‘leaving their substance’ (ver. 14) makes the reference to the future beatific vision more likely. Death is to them the stripping off of their chosen portion ; it is to him whose portion is God, the fuller possession of all that he loves and desires.”

3. *By a profound reverence*, which is the secret and outcome of both. Rapt in the thought of that divine communion the Psalmist is led, like the Apostle, to contemplate things not lawful to be uttered. Hence, instead of confidence, "I shall be satisfied" (R.V.), he instinctively passes into the language of prayer (cohortatives)—not assurance, as in the presence of his fellows, but, as in the presence of the ineffable glory, an equally valuable and, it may be, a rarer thing—humility. "*Let me be satisfied . . . with Thy likeness.*"

3. OTHER USES OF THE COHORTATIVE

In view of a tendency in the later stages of the language to use the stronger forms without the special force they have in earlier times, passages are constantly met with in which, as we are informed, the usual cohortative sense is not to be attached to the verbal form at all.

(a) In many cases it appears to be nothing more than *an emphatic imperfect*. So Jer. vi. 10, "To whom *shall I speak and testify*, that they may hear?" Isa. lix. 10, "*We grope* for the wall like the blind, yea, *we grope* as they that have no eyes." Or Jer. iv. 21, "How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?" In these and similar passages, it is

said, the ordinary imperfect would have been quite sufficient to convey the speaker's meaning; and it is simply a waste of ingenuity to try and fit, on each case as it arises, some known cohortative sense. The rule, however, as thus stated, is only partially correct. We strongly advise the Hebrew student to judge each case on its own merits. The effort to find some adequate reason for the choice of the voluntative is not so serious a waste of ingenuity as the assumption that the same author has used the cohortative form in both senses—sometimes with, and sometimes without, its distinctive signification. In any case, the habit of testing each passage as it arises is of great practical importance, and will frequently lead the careful expositor into one of the most fruitful fields of biblical exegesis. In Jer. vi. 10, for instance, why not translate the cohortative as a modal form in the sense of a deliberative subjunctive? Not, to whom *shall* I speak? but, to whom *am I* to speak?—an expression that brings out the mental perplexity of the prophet in view of Israel's incorrigible depravity. In that case, it would indicate the mental attitude of the speaker, as of one who was virtually seeking advice; and therefore in a perfectly intelligible sense, might remain as a genuine cohortative. Similarly, in Isa. lix. 10, "*We grope* for the wall," is not the

only possible rendering. Represented as in the very act of feeling for the wall, they might well encourage one another, saying, "*Let us grope* as they that have no eyes." For as Delitzsch has expressed it, it is "the impulse of self-preservation which drives them in their *ἀπορία* to feel for a way of escape."

(β) A second use of the cohortative is found in a poetic or vivid representation of the past. The narrator recalls the thoughts or resolutions which he had cherished on former occasions; and by the choice of the voluntative he dramatically indicates the energy or impulse with which he had expressed his desire. Or better still, he is able, in spirit, to transport himself back to the depicted scene; and, like the Bride in Cant. iii. 2, lives over again, in thought, the rapture of that former experience.

Let me rise now, that I may go about the city,
In the streets and in the broad ways,
Let me seek him whom my soul loveth.

Or, again, in chap. v. 2, not "I was asleep, but my heart waked"; but, transporting herself back to the scene in question, "I *would* (fain) sleep, but my heart waketh." Why? Because the voice of my beloved is heard even in my dreams. Like Tennyson's Rizpah—

"I cannot hear what you say for my Willie's voice in the wind."

The entire ineffectual effort to bathe her spirit in slumber is mirrored in the well-chosen verbal form ; and who does not feel that the English version, with its prosaic preterite or present (margin), is strangely lifeless and colourless in comparison ? So in Ps. lxvi. 6 :—

“ He turned the sea into dry land :
They went through the river on foot :
There *would* we rejoice in Him.”

(γ) The most interesting use of the cohortative, however, has yet to be noted. According to A. B. Davidson, “ It is not unnatural that the cohortative or intentional should be used to express an action which one resigns himself to do, though under external pressure—a subjective *I must*.” Cf. Ps. lvii. 5 :—

“ My soul is among lions ;
I *lie* (or, *must lie*) among them that, etc.”

Or Isa. xxxviii. 10, “ I said, In the noontide of my days I shall go (or, must go) into the gates of Sheol.” Driver, however, is not so confident regarding this particular idiom. External compulsion there may be ; but the internal resignation is not so *involuntary* as this view tries to make out. In no sense does the idea of impulse from within disappear before that of compulsion from without. And to that extent, at least, the definite phrase,

"I must," is obviously inept. Here, as elsewhere, the student can only be advised to examine each passage as it arises. In Ps. lvii., for instance, which is far too courageous a poem for the gloomy resignation depicted in verse 5, we may find a more satisfactory rendering of the Psalmist's thought if we paraphrase the lines as follows:—
 "Even though my soul is among lions, *I will deliberately lie down* in the midst of surrounding foes; for in view of verse 4, I know that my deliverer is near at hand, and no manner of calamity can ever befall His servant." In this case the cohortative אֶשְׁכַּב would denote his fixed determination to put his trust in Israel's God in spite of all the enemies who might be arrayed against him. Or, again, in Isa. xxxviii. 10, why might not the afflicted monarch say, "*Let me go* (not, I must go) into the gates of Sheol"? just as the suffering patriarch exclaimed in Job xiv. 13, "Oh that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol . . . until thy wrath be past." Other passages are Ps. lv. 3, which might easily read:—

"Attend unto me, and answer me;
 I am restless in my complaint, and *would moan*;
 Because of the voice of the enemy, etc."

And Ps. lxxxviii. 16, which is rendered in the R.V. :—

"While I suffer thy terrors, *I am distracted*."

But the ἀπ. λεγ. אֶפְנֶה is probably a corruption for a verb meaning *to grow numb*; and if so, the form of the interjected prayer may well be retained as full of meaning. "I have borne thy terrors! would that I might become numb!"

For a practical illustration we may turn to Ps. xlii. 5 (in Heb.):—

אֵלֶּה אֲזַכֵּר וְאֶשְׁפָּךְ עָלַי בְּפִשִּׁי כִּי

"These things I remember, and pour out my soul upon
me,

How I went with the throng, etc."

For a variety of reasons this rendering of the R.V. cannot be accepted. The cohortatives are not only translated as ordinary imperfects, but the punctuation of the first two lines follows neither the Masoretic Text nor the LXX. We may begin with some allusion to the accentuation. The main logical division is clearly at בְּפִשִּׁי; for here the resolution to give himself to earnest recollection closes, and the delineation of his past privileges begins. It is therefore to be marked, not by R'bhia, as in the present Masoretic text, but by Olev'yored, as in various MSS. collated by Dr. Wickes.¹ Hence the colon of the A.V., and not the comma of the R.V., is to be retained

¹ "Poetical Accents," p. 36

as the correct English punctuation (*cf.* the similar pointing of the LXX). In keeping with this division, the pronoun אֲנִי is not to be referred to the second half of the verse, as is generally supposed; but is to be regarded as a suitable summing up of the previous verses, which contain a vivid and pathetic description of the exile's present. These things—his panting for God, like the hart for the water brooks, his conscious separation from the Temple worship (3^b), and the taunts of heathen enemies who insinuated that the God in whom he trusted was either callous or impotent—these things cut him to the quick, and made him feel the bitterness of his present lot. So that we may render:—

These things *let me remember, and pour out my soul upon me:*

“*For*” (כִּי)—with a pathetic reference to his past —“*I used to pass on* (freq. imperf.) *with the throng, and led them to the house of God, etc.*” As a Korahite Levite (see Title), or even as an high priest (if the Psalm must be brought down to the time of Onias III., with Duhm, etc.), the exile was wont to conduct pilgrims to Jerusalem, and share in the solemn jubilations of the annual festivals. And why does he recall these pleasing memories now? Is it simply to indulge the luxury of his grief, remembering happier things?

No, the man who thus consecrates his present by the hallowing memories of his past is preparing himself as a man of the open vision for a larger sphere of usefulness in the future. We may not be able, with the LXX, to carry back this prospective idea to the middle of the present verse, and translate the freq. imperf. כִּי אֶעֱבֹר, by ὅτι διελεύσομαι; but Kirkpatrick is certainly right in saying that the recollection of his past is the best antidote to the sneers of the heathen, and the best ground of assurance that the God in whom he trusted could not really have deserted him now. The verse would thus form the natural transition to the confidence of verse 6.

Our subject, then, is *the Exile's lament*, and these are its three natural divisions:—

- (1) A voluntary recapitulation of his present misery (5^a).
- (2) The brighter memory of his past (5^b).
- (3) The pledge which this recollection gave him that in Jehovah, the God of Israel, he had a future—a future of rare felicity and reward.

“Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him,
Who is the help of my countenance and my God.”

CHAPTER XI

THE TENSES AND MOODS WITH VAV

SYNTAX, in general, may be defined as the evolution of thought. It deals with the way in which the various parts of a sentence are linked together in the framing of a connected discourse. The kind of connection is ever varying. It is determined by the particular stage reached by the language in the development of human speech. In the Semitic tongues, for example, which stand at a comparatively early stage in the history of that development, we are not to seek the same wealth of connecting particles as is found in the elaborate mechanism of classical or even New Testament Greek. In point of fact there is a great dearth of particles in Biblical Hebrew. The favourite method is to link sentences together by means of a simple "and." Instead of Hypotaxis, or the subordination of one clause to another, we have Parataxis, or the co-ordination of clauses—the different parts being placed in juxtaposition, and the reader left to determine

their true relation by a due appreciation of the context. This is the oldest and simplest method of showing that one action is the condition or result of another: as Ps. civ. 29 :—

Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled ;
Thou gatherest in their breath, they die.

The first clause in each line is the antecedent cause of the second, so that we may read :—

When Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled ;
If Thou gatherest in their breath, they die.

Still at this early stage the clauses are simply placed side by side, and are frequently found, as in the case before us, without any connecting particle at all.

Beginning with this simple idiom of co-ordination, the next step in the Syntax would be the finding of suitable links of connection to indicate with greater clearness the syntactical relation of the whole. First, by the use of primary conjunctions, and then by the coining of temporal and conditional particles it would seek to make the sentence syntactically complete by making it less dependent for its particular nuance on the general scope and colouring of the context. It is the former of these expedients which is the outstanding feature of Old Testament Hebrew. By means of the conjunction *vav*, whether con-

nective or consecutive, and aided by context and intonation, it is able to denote all the varying shades of logical distinction expressed by the later forms of Indo-European grammar. The surprising adaptability of this construction is one of the most pleasing features in the study of Biblical Hebrew. There is practically no limit to the range of its ever-changing applications. Cf. Ps. civ. 20 :—

“Thou makest darkness, *and* it is night,”

—a statement that may mean, as in verse 29—

“*When* Thou makest darkness, it is night,”

or—

“Thou makest darkness *that it may be* night,”

—the simple vav with the jussive (וַיַּהֲרִי) indicating the design or purpose of the preceding act. Similarly in Ps. li. 9 (Heb.) :—

“Purge me with hyssop, *that I may be* clean,”

or verse 18—

“For Thou delightest not in sacrifice, *that I should give* it,”

—where the cognate idea of *effect* seems to be the most suitable rendering of the jussive with light vav.

The most striking modification, however, of

this construction is the unique and essentially Hebraic idiom of what is known as *vav consecutive*. Instead of narrating a series of events by a succession of verbs in the perfect, each fresh verb is connected with the clause which precedes it by means of strong *vav* with the imperfect. See Gen. i. 3, and the Bible *passim*. The same idiom appears on the Moabite Stone, and in the Siloam Inscription—showing that it was fully recognised and approved by the immediate neighbours of the ancient Hebrews—and Professor Sayce is of opinion that something precisely similar is found in the structure of Assyrian grammar; but otherwise it is confined almost entirely to the Hebrew of the Old Testament. It is not found in Aramaic nor in Arabic; and in the later stages of Hebrew itself, as in the Mishnah and Rabbinical writings, it is wholly superseded by the obvious and natural construction of the perfect with light *vav*.

Reserving the details of this particular idiom to the fuller treatment of Chapters XII.-XIV., the preacher may examine, even at this point, the great prophetic picture of Isa. lxiii. 1-6—a passage which turns on the different values assigned to the conjunction *vav*. “In these verses,” according to the *Ency. Biblica*, “we have a good illustration of the traditional interpretation of

the Targumists. They wished to find here a reference to *future* punishment upon the heathen, and therefore pointed the verbs as futures with simple vav, instead of with vav consecutive."¹ The true view, we are informed, is to point the verbs with strong vav, as in the aorists of the LXX, and to regard them, not as a threat of future punishment, but as the announcement of a deliverance already wrought in behalf of the Jewish captives, "I *trod* them in Mine anger and *trampled* them in My fury, . . . for a day of vengeance *was* in Mine heart, and My year of release *had* come." Simple, however, as this emendation may appear, the writer in the *Biblica* is not at all convinced that it will be readily accepted. He is generous enough to admit that "the Masoretes were too good scholars simply to point the true text wrong." There must have been some corruption in the transmitted consonants to form the starting-point for the wrong interpretation. Hence we are invited to obliterate the allusion to "Edom" altogether by reading מְאַדָּם instead of מְאַדָּרִים in verse 1. The whole contention, however, that we must choose between the past and the future in the elucidation of this prophecy, is, to our mind,

¹ Col. 5029.

nothing better than a waste of ingenuity. The thought of the Targumist lay deeper; and so also did the necessities and convictions of the Jewish captives. In their view, the one who came from Edom did well to speak of the past, but what of the future? The captives were not yet planted in their own land; and the fears that haunted them with respect to their future destiny were not all the figment of a heated imagination. What had the ideal conqueror, "Knee-deep in Idumean blood"¹ to say regarding these? It was not the Masorete alone, but the prophetic spirit of the Exile which replied, "I *will* tread them in Mine anger, . . . and I *will* stain all My raiment; for a day of vengeance *is* in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed *is* come." In a word, the deliverance desiderated by the history, and sketched by the prophet, is both past and future; and to pit the one against the other—whether the LXX against the Targum, or the Targum against the LXX—is entirely gratuitous. The true view must be comprehensive enough to include both: and this is what the present Masoretic pointing has done superbly. If we read the future Hiphil אֶגְאִילָה in verse 3 instead of the suspicious Aramaic perfect אֶגְאִלְתִּי—and surely

¹ Stanley, "The Jewish Church," II. 471.

a cohortative and jussive might well go together—the whole passage may be paraphrased as follows:—Turning towards Edom, that battleground of a long-standing and implacable enmity, the prophet exclaims, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments of Bozrah?” And the answer comes, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” He is mighty to save in the future, no less than in the past—glorious in His apparel, and travelling in the greatness of His strength. A second time the question is put, “Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel? and Thy garments like his that treadeth the wine-press?” And the voice replies, “I *have trodden* (perfect) the wine-press alone; and of the peoples there was no man with Me”—none of all the surrounding nations came to My help against the mighty! And yet, just as in the subjugation of Edom, so now in the subduing of all those who oppose My purpose, “I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; yea, let their lifeblood bespatter all My garments, for I will stain all My raiment.” Not Edom alone, but all the other enemies of His people will be trodden down and subdued.

“For a day of vengeance is in Mine heart,
And the year of My redeemed is come.

And I look, but (even now) there is no helper ;
 Yea, I am appalled, but there is no supporter ;
 Nevertheless (in the past) Mine own arm wrought¹
 salvation for Me ;
 And My fury—it supported Me.
 Thus will I tread down the people in Mine anger,
 And make them drunk in My fury,
 Yea, I will pour out their lifeblood upon the earth."

The entire picture is a sublime and powerful delineation of Israel's promised redemption, but couched in the imagery of the past ; and these are its main features :—

- (1) *Vengeance*, on all those who oppose the purpose of Jehovah.
- (2) *Deliverance*, for the pious in Israel.
- (3) *Divine power*, capable of accomplishing both ; for even though the ideal conqueror has to tread the wine-press alone, He is mighty to save, and the fully ripened purpose of Jehovah can never be resisted with impunity. This is the teaching of Israel's past, and this is the promise of Israel's future :—

"Thou *hast fought* Thy people's foes ;
 Thou *wilt heal* Thy people's woes."

¹ Note the change to *vav* consecutive.

CHAPTER XII

VAV CONSECUTIVE WITH THE IMPERFECT

THE older name, *vav conversive*, is now generally discarded as inadequate. It originated with the old Jewish grammarians. They assumed that because a form like וַיֹּאמֶר (Gen. i. 3) is translated as a past, and the form וְאָכַלְתָּ (iii. 18) as a future, the vav, in either case, has changed the time-specification of the verb, and is, therefore, rightly described as וְ הַפּוֹדֵד. The theory of the Hebrew Tenses, however, has been entirely remodelled. It is not the meaning of the verb, temporal or otherwise, which is the precise point at issue, but the nature of its connection with the preceding context; and since the construction with strong vav points to this connection as a necessary *sequence* or result, the name *vav consecutive* is now adopted as a more accurate description of the formula. True, in its union with strong vav, the one tense-form is still changed into the sphere and nuance of the other,

and to that extent the older title is not to be regarded as inaccurate. Yet even in this case the indispensable element of sequence is not to be overlooked; and in order to give distinctness to this wider aspect of the subject, we must at least conclude with Ewald, that it ought to be conceived as a *vav consecutive-conversive*. The simpler title, *vav consecutive*, adopted by most moderns, was originally suggested by Böttcher in 1827.

1. ITS FORM

In the formation of this idiom there are two details that are worthy of special mention. We have at once the pointing of *vav* with pathach, followed by dagesh forte, and the use of the apocopated form of the verb, accompanied by a retrocession of the tone. Instead of יִבְרָךְ we write וַיְבָרֵךְ, and for יִקְוּם, וַיִּקְוּם.

What is the real significance of these two changes?

(1) *Pathach* and *dagesh* have been explained in various ways. Some accept the explanation of Lagarde. וַיֵּאמֶר, for instance, is regarded as equivalent to וַיֵּאמֶר — וַיֵּאמֶר, and—*it-came-to-pass—he-goes-on-to-say*. Cf. the frequent use

of *Kaì ἐγένετο λέγει* in New Testament Greek. The words, of course, are never found in this expanded form; they are always condensed or run together into one word—the pathach being followed by dagesh forte, precisely as in the pointing of the definite article. The suggestion of Ewald was somewhat similar. He conjectured that the syllable *a-*, between the conjunction and the verb, is of pronominal origin, and corresponds to the temporal augment in Sanskrit and Greek. Originally it was perhaps *אז*, and had the meaning of *then*; as *וַיִּקְהֵל* (Ex. xxxv. 1), which is exactly parallel to *אז יִקְהֵל* (1 Kings viii. 1). The view of Driver, however, is preferable to both of these. According to it, the pathach and dagesh are nothing more than the fuller and more original form of the *conjunction*. In the name *וַי*, for instance, the conjunction is represented by two consonants, with the connecting vowel *a*, just as in the fuller and more original form of the definite article (*הַל*); and if, as in the latter, the final consonant has been assimilated to the following letter by means of dagesh forte, this, in view of similar combinations, is just what might have been expected. It is quite true that in the *Perfect* with strong vav, the con-

necting vowel has been reduced to a weak and indistinct sheva, as וְאֵלֶּיךָ ; but this is no real exception to the rule. The emphasis connected with the personal pronoun, which falls at the end of the perfect tenses, and not at the beginning, as in the imperfect, is sufficient to account for these necessary fluctuations. The tone is moved forward to the ultima, or retracted to the penult, as the case may be, and the pathach is weakened to sheva, or preserved by dagesh forte, in accordance with the rules of Hebrew prosody.

(2) A similar divergence exists with regard to the apocopated or shortened form of the verb. Externally, it is identical with the abbreviated form of the jussive; and the question at once arises whether the similarity in form may not occasionally carry with it a similarity in meaning? Is there any sense in which we can speak of a jussive mood in forms descriptive of the past? Driver says no. It is quite impracticable to do anything with the idea of command, permission, or wish in the narration of past events. Besides, the idea is not needed to explain the apocopated form of the verb. The retrocession of the tone, occasioned by the heavy prefix וְ , is a sufficient explanation of the apocopation.

Hence, while the two idioms do resemble one another in outward appearance, there is no necessity to seek a jussive or modal sense in the imperfect after strong vav. The answer to this is twofold. It fails to do justice to the admitted use of the cohortative after vav consecutive, and overlooks the wider use of the jussive desiderated in Chapter IX. With respect to the first point, it is not disputed that the form of the cohortative is repeatedly employed in the delineation of past events. The passages are sufficiently numerous both in poetry and prose (Ps. iii. 6, Gen. xxxii. 5, etc.); and while a strict cohortative or admonitory sense may not be admissible in a plain historical past, Professor Driver has no difficulty in specifying another meaning which is equally in keeping with the wider applications of the mood. The termination *-ah*, in this connection, is merely *intensive* or *energetic*. "It strengthens the animation (*Lebendigkeit*) of the verbal idea" (Delitzsch). There is nothing admonitory, or even "intentional," in the lengthened form, but it adds emphasis to the idea of movement conveyed by the tense; and in this sense may be fitly introduced into graphic delineations of the past. Thus in Genesis xxxii. 5, Jacob is represented as sending servants to his brother Esau, and saying, "Thus saith thy servant Jacob, . . . I have oxen,

and asses and flocks, . . . *and I have sent* (וַאֲשַׁלְחָהּ) to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight." In a passage like this, however, the full force of the cohortative is not exhausted by the bare idea of *intensity*. Whether one thinks of the younger man's anxiety when he heard of his brother's coming, or his clearly expressed desire to find favour in his sight, it is impossible to exclude from his request the mental attitude of the speaker, or not to find in the emphatic form of the verb the closely related element of intention. In fine, we have a verbal form which is rightly regarded as modal; and if this be once admitted in one form of the voluntative (the cohortative), it will not be easy to convince the Hebrew student that a similar modification may not occasionally be present in the jussive.

Let him examine, for example, the varying forms of even one verb, בָּכָה, *to weep*, in the following four texts. In 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27 the heavy prefix גַּ has retracted the tone, and produced the apocopated form of the verb גַּבַּחַ; but in 2 Kings xxii. 19 a slight emphasis in the reading, which the Masoretes have duly marked by a disjunctive accent, has been sufficient to

preserve the unmodified form וַתִּבְכֶּה. In these texts we have a plain, consecutive narrative in the course of a historical review, and there is nothing to suggest in either passage that we have a modal or jussive use of the verb. But in contrast with these, let the student note the apocopated form in Gen. xxxvii. 35, and 2 Sam. xix. 1 (in Heb.). Here, if anywhere, we have not simply the bare narration of past events, but the mental attitude of a sorrow-stricken father, weeping as for an only son, and his deliberate, though resigned, determination to give himself to the luxury of grief. How is this expressed? By the intensive or intentional jussive in both instances—even though, as in the second passage, the verbal form is marked by the strongest disjunctive accent. In the form וַתִּבְכֶּה (2 Kings xxii. 19) a minor distinctive like Tiphcha is sufficient to preserve the unmodified imperfect; but in David's grief for Absalom, the abrupt jussive form is retained even with so heavy an accent as Athnach (וַיִּבְכֶּה). Clearly a distinction like this is not to be neglected. It is full of meaning for the preacher. And if the expressive idiom cannot be thus stretched on the Procrustian bed of any preconceived rule or system, the Hebrew student is well advised to keep an

open mind, and to judge each case as it arises.

2. ITS NATURE

Of the actual genesis of this idiom, we know, and can know, but little. It lies in a period anterior to the present state of the language; and in the last resort can only be referred to the peculiar liveliness and vigour of early Semitic speech. Even in its inception, however, the element of *sequence* must have been one of the formative principles. Otherwise, the natural construction of the perfect with light *vav* would certainly have been used instead. The mere play of fancy would never have given rise to two special tense-expressions, unless these lively transpositions had been supported and justified by a definite logical secution. Not that logical sequence is to be sought in every instance of *vav* consecutive with the imperfect. The probability is that, having become a pretty common formula for the connecting of past events, the idiom came to be used for all kinds of sequence—whether of mere chronological succession or of mental association—without any idea of regarding each new detail as the necessary consequence or result of the preceding act.

The kind of connection which is strictly conse-

quential may be variously expressed. It may be rendered by *so*, *and so*, or left more indefinitely to the general sense of the narrative. Cf. Gen. xxiii. 20, "*And so the field was made sure* (וַיַּקֶּם) unto Abraham by the children of Heth." Or Judges iii. 30, "*So Moab was subdued* (וַיִּתְּכַנַּע) that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years." Even in a passage like Gen. xl. 23, the strong vav is not to be regarded as merely connective. "He remembered not Joseph, *but forgot him*." Obviously the meaning is, that because the chief butler made no effort to retain the memory of a distinct personal favour rendered by the Hebrew captive, he thereby (as a necessary consequence) allowed his benefactor to slip out of his thoughts altogether. Of the more general nuance of succession in time, or association in thought, the student may turn to examples like the following:—Gen. iv. 8, "*And Cain rose up and slew him*." Ex. ii. 10, "*And she called his name Moses, and said*, etc." Or Job xiv. 10:—

"But man dieth, and wasteth away :
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, etc."

Here the new statement, introduced by strong vav, is *parallel* rather than consecutive to the principle clause; but occurring as it does in the

detailed picture of the patriarch's hapless condition, it is suitably represented by וַיִּנָּע.

Isa. xxxix. 1 is scarcely a case in point. The R.V. renders, not as a pluperfect, *had* heard, but simply as a fresh circumstance suggested to the mind of the prophet, and rightly introduced at this point by the help of vav consecutive with the imperfect—"For he *heard* that he had been sick." Nevertheless, the actual report of Hezekiah's sickness must have been prior to the sending of the Babylonian embassy; and since the pluperfect sense is found in the parallel passage in 2 Kings xx. 12, the suggestion made by Delitzsch and others is probably to be accepted as correct that וַיִּשְׁמַע is a copyist's error for כִּי שָׁמַע, "*for he had heard.*" Cf. 1 Sam. ii. 21, where we have a similar confounding of the two letters כ and ו. The accepted reading, כִּי פָקַד, yields no intelligible sense, and must be corrected into וַיִּפְקֹד with the LXX. Emended in this way, Isa. xxxix. 1 is not to be regarded as a case of vav consecutive at all.

And yet on other grounds it is of the highest possible interest to the Hebrew student. It has broached the question how far the imperfect with strong vav can convey the meaning of a *Pluperfect*? There is, of course, no doubt that the

formula may denote the *continuation* of a pluperfect, as Gen. xxvi. 18, xxxi. 34, xxxix. 13, etc. But can it *introduce* it? Can it, instead of conducting us forward to a *succeeding* act or detail, lead us back to one which is chronologically *anterior*? Driver, in his exhaustive note, has gone over all the passages, and concluded, like Böttcher, in the negative—quoting Dr. Pusey in the “Minor Prophets,” who remarks on Jonah iv. 5, “Some render, contrary to grammar, ‘and Jonah *had* gone.’” Strange to say, the Jewish grammarians were unanimously in favour of this construction; and the A.V., in following their example, has inserted the reading “had” in a great variety of passages. But in the R.V. every instance has been corrected or emended, with the exception of 1 Kings xiii. 12, Isa. xxxviii. 21, 22, Zech. vii. 2, Neh. ii. 9; and even in these instances the student will experience little difficulty in finding another and equally admissible reading. In 1 Kings xiii. 12, for example, the sense requires the Hiphil **וַיִּרְאֵהוּ** instead of **וַיִּרְאֵה**, and we ought to render as in the margin, or in the LXX, καὶ δεικνύουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ υἱοῦ κ.τ.λ. “And his sons *shewed* him what way the man of God went.”

For a practical illustration suggested by this distinction, the preacher may turn to Ex. xxxii. 29.

The A.V. renders, "For Moses *had* said"—the pluperfect implying that the injunction to consecrate themselves to Jehovah was at least parallel, if not anterior, to the divine commission in verse 27; so that the consecrating act and the avenging deed were really one and the same. There is nothing to show, however, that this was the intention of the Hebrew leader. And within the verse itself it fails to do justice to the particle כִּי, which is signalised by a disjunctive accent. In reality, the act of consecration is posterior, not anterior, to the avenging deed (ver. 28), while כִּי furnishes the *reasons* for the all-important addition. Translate, "And Moses *said*, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord; *for* every man hath been against his son (R.V. margin) and against his brother: *and that he may bestow* (וְלָתַת) upon you a blessing." The infin. construct with וְ is here used, simply as a shorter way of continuing the preceding verbal action.¹ It adds a second reason for the act of consecration. It suggests the possibility of the inherited curse (Gen. xlix. 7) being changed into a national blessing. Interpreted in this way, the expositor at once feels that the original proclamation,

¹ "A brachylogy," A. B. D. "Syntax," p. 129.

“Who is on the Lord’s side?” is followed by at least a threefold dedication; or that they who espouse the cause of Jehovah must be, at least, three things in one.

- (1) *Soldiers*—to wipe out, sword in hand, the dishonour caused by idolatry (ver. 27).
- (2) *Priests*—to fill their hands, not with the sword of vengeance, but with the censer of a nation’s worship. The blessing conferred on the Levites would be the scattering abroad of priests (ver. 29).
- (3) *Intercessors*—to pray for that stiff-necked but now sorely-smitten people, even though the price of Israel’s forgiveness should be the effacing of their own names out of the Lord’s Book of Life (vers. 30-33).

Were the Levites prepared to espouse the cause of Jehovah in that profound, spiritual sense?—with the censer, no less than with the sword, with self-sacrificing love, no less than with avenging zeal? If so, the consecrating act would have its counterpart in a divine installation—not the filling of the hand with any particular gift (1 Chron. xxix. 5), but with the rights and reins of office (Ex. xxix. 9). Levi would attain his consecration.¹

¹ See the author’s “Mosaic Tabernacle,” pp. 20, 50.

3. ITS USE

It is used, in general, to continue a perfect or other verbal expression, which furnishes the true standpoint of the writer. It is not necessary, in every instance, to begin with a definite verbal form. Anything that provides a suitable starting-point, as a statement of time, or a *casus pendens*, will serve the purpose equally well. The imperfect with strong vav will catch up and continue the logical succession, whatever may have been the form or manner of its introduction. Hos. xi. 1—"When Israel was a child, *then I loved him*, and called my son out of Egypt." Even a simple imperfect or a participle, which is used in a sense equivalent to a perfect, may be skilfully selected to begin the new development, and then the imperfect with strong vav will immediately succeed it. Hos. xi. 4, "I *drew* them (imperf.) with cords of a man, with bands of love, *and I was* (וָאָהֵיכָה) to them as they that take off the yoke, etc."

The normal use of the construction, however, is to continue an ordinary *perfect* in any one of the many shades of meaning characteristic of that Hebrew tense.¹ Does the perfect, *e.g.*, refer,

¹ See above, Chapter IV.

like the Greek Aorist, to a finished action in *past* time? The imperfect with *vav* consecutive is at once brought within the sphere of the same definite conception. Gen. iii. 13, "The serpent deceived me, *and I ate*." Or does the imperfect with strong *vav* continue a perfect in the sense of a general truth, which we can only express by the English *present*? The same English idiom must be retained and applied to both clauses, as Job xiv. 2:—

"He cometh forth like a flower, *and withereth*."

Or finally, does the fresh action, introduced by strong *vav*, refer to *future* time, being the continuation of a prophetic perfect, or of an ideal situation in which the principle of the prophetic perfect is really present? The same method of interpretation must be applied to it. The ideal standpoint of the prophet is not to be sacrificed to the prosaic standpoint of the present, except as a concession to the English reader, who might be slow to realise the surprising richness of the Hebraic point of view. Ps. xxii. 30, "*Have eaten*," etc.; Isa. ii. 9, "*Are bowed down*"—*i.e.*, in punishment, as if the doom of the miscreants had already fallen, and not simply in practice, as in the A.V. Ps. lxiv. 8-10, where in confident expectation of a speedy and righteous retribution, the Psalmist exclaims:—

But God *hath* shot at them ;
 With an arrow *they* are wounded.

And all men fear ;
 And declare the work of God,
 And wisely consider of His doing.

For a concluding practical illustration of this significant idiom the student may refer to Isa. ix. 5 (Heb.). Disappointed by the persistent unworthiness of King Ahaz (*cf.* vii. 9), the prophet projects himself into the future, and pictures Israel's ideal king, bearing the insignia of office, and receiving the homage and acclamation of the people. "Unto us a son *has been given* (נָתַן), and the government *is laid* upon his shoulder, *and they call* him (וַיִּקְרָא), etc." And then follows the august description of the Prince-of-the-Four-Names—"Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." This requires the conjunctive accent, M'huppakh, on the term "wonderful," instead of the disjunctive T'lisha, as in the ordinary notation ; and the present accentuation being abnormal in other respects,¹ the slight emendation thus suggested may at once be admitted into the text. It has the manifest advantage of bringing the first part of the title into conformity

¹ Wickes, "Prose Accentuation," p. 134.

with the other three compound expressions (R.V. margin). But what is the true significance of the Fourfold Name? Does it mean that in the dark days of Ahaz the attributes of a noble and valorous monarch were conspicuous by their absence? and that Isaiah was constrained to turn to the greatness of the Messianic age in order to fan the patriotism and deepen the spirituality of Israel's theocratic ideals? If so, he never painted on the shifting screen of the future a more glorious portrait than this. God's vicegerent on earth is already depicted as seated upon his throne, and these are the four main elements in his sovereignty:—(1) *Wonderful counsel*. Unlike the pitiable vacillation of Ahaz, the ideal king gives wholesome direction to his subjects, and surprises all by the wisdom and uniqueness of his plans. (2) *Divine power*. As Jehovah's representative, he shows that where there is counsel sufficient to guide and inspire a people, there is also energy and masterful ease in giving effect to his purpose (*cf.* xxviii. 29, margin). (3) *Everlasting love*. This monarch is the father of his people. By wisdom and might he has welded them into a nation; and thus "begotten," they are made to feel that they are constantly surrounded and shielded by a father's tenderness and care. (4) *Messianic*

peace. By counsel, power, and love he brings in an era of abiding tranquillity and rest; for, as Delitzsch has expressed it, "the other names intentionally die away in שלום, like the three utterances of the Aaronic blessing."

CHAPTER XIII

VAV CONSECUTIVE WITH THE PERFECT

FOR the origin and meaning of this idiom the student should consult the exhaustive and illuminative section in Driver's "Hebrew Tenses," pp. 114-124. According to it, the formula of vav Perfect was evoked by the corresponding idiom of vav consecutive with the Imperfect. Just as sequence in time or association in thought causes a *completed* action to pass into the new phase of incipency; so here, though in the opposite direction, a *nascent* action is regarded as advancing to completion and thereby becoming perfect. The one is the direct antithesis of the other. If the latter, for instance, retracts the tone to the penult,

as וַיֹּאמֶר, the former throws it forward on the

ultima as וַיֹּאמְרָה; and this difference in form is accompanied by a corresponding difference in meaning. If the one represents actions as real, or descriptive of concrete events in the past, the other views them as contingent and indefinite, like

the abstract possibilities of the future, *cf.* וְאֵל (Gen. iii. 13) with וְהָיִיתִי (1 Kings xxii. 22). Hence, if the imperfect with וְ can only be applied to the future when it is contemplated as fixed and definite, the perfect with י can only be applied to the past or present, when the events are conceived as unfixed and indefinite. The two idioms, in fact, are contrasted at every point, and yet in one essential particular, they are practically identical. In both instances, it is the time or nuance of the first verb that determines the date or character of the second. What the strong vav seems to do is to point to the preceding verb and say, this verb indicates the sphere within which the assertion contained in the second verb is to be verified. This, as Driver conjectures, may be the real explanation after all of the emphatic alteration of the tone: it is designed to mark this limitation. It seems to say, *There!* to the hearer: beware lest you construe in an absolute sense what is only true with reference to the scope of the preceding action. Consequently, if the initial verb be a jussive, frequentative or subjunctive, the perfect with strong vav is virtually the same. To all intents and purposes it has lost its individuality

and passed under the sway of the dominant verb. In a few brief paragraphs we shall look at some of the more important usages of this Hebrew idiom.

1. IT CONTINUES AN IMPERFECT IN THE SENSE OF A FUTURE

In this connection, however, the imperfect may denote a great variety of meanings. It may begin with a *pure future*, as in Gen. xviii. 18, "Abraham shall become a great nation, *and* all the nations of the earth *shall be blessed* in him" (וְנִבְרַכְתָּ). Yet even in this case the student will always have to enquire whether the context may not demand a different shade of meaning—not a mere future, but something of *purpose*, or, it may be, *command*, translating "I will," or "thou shalt" in accordance with these nuances. Ex. viii. 23, "And *I will* put a division between my people and thy people." 1 Sam. xvii. 32, "Thy servant *will go and fight*." Ex. xx. 24, "An altar of earth *shalt thou make* Me, *and sacrifice* upon it." Verse 9, "Six days shalt thou labour, *and do* (וַעֲשִׂיתָ) all thy work." In these and similar instances the precise shade of meaning is obvious enough; but what is the real import

of a passage like Judges vi. 16, "Surely I will be with thee, *and thou shalt smite* the Midianites as one man"? Is this a promise of victory or an injunction to fight?

Closely related to this usage is the use of the simple imperfect after *various particles*. Gen. xxvii. 12, "*Perhaps* (אולי) my father will feel me, *and I shall be* as one that mocks him." Chap. xxxvii. 26, "What gain is it *that* (כי) we should kill our brother, *and cover* his blood." So או = *or if* (1 Sam. xxvi. 10), אז = *then* (vi. 3), עד = *until* (i. 22), איך = *how?* (Gen. xxxix. 9), and many others. Or the telic particles לָמַעַן, פֶּן, etc., as, "*Lest* he come, *and smite* me" (Gen. xxxii. 12). "Therefore shall the word of the Lord be . . . line upon line . . . *that* they may go, *and fall backward*"—*i.e.*, line upon line in judgment (Isa. xxviii. 13).

It is not always an exception to this rule to find, after the imperfect with these particles, not vav consecutive with the perfect, but the imperfect with *simple* vav. Cf. Hos. x. 12, "Break up your fallow ground: for now it is time to seek the Lord, *till He come and rain* (עֲדִיבוּא וַיִּירָה) righteousness upon you." Vav consecutive with the perfect would have meant that the showering

down of righteousness was the result or consequence of the preceding act—that the “raining” was subsequent to the “coming”—but such an idea would have been alien to Hosea’s thought, and only have introduced confusion into his imagery. Jehovah does not rain blessing upon Israel *after* He has appeared in their midst. The divine coming *is* the blessing. Hence a verbal form which indicates parallelism rather than consequence, or even identity rather than result, is more in consonance with the prophet’s meaning, and gives a deeper spiritual import to his language. The present use of *וַיֹּרֶה*, therefore, is perfectly legitimate, and is not to be regarded as an infringement of the rule that after *עַד* with the imperfect, the element of sequence is usually denoted by the perfect with strong *vav*.

In other respects the last-named passage is full of interest for the preacher. It is known as the Parable of the Heifer, and suggests, at least, a threefold division.

(1) *Jehovah’s past goodness*, or *חֶסֶד* (ver. 11). It is compared to the indulgence shown by a kind master to a newly broken-in heifer. No galling yoke had as yet marred the beauty of its neck; but in the easy work of the threshing

floor it is allowed to go round and round, enjoying at every turn the allotted hire of the unmuzzled animal (Deut. xxv. 4). But, instead of profiting by this indulgence, Israel had proved herself to be a "stubborn heifer"—departing from Jehovah. She had ploughed wickedness and reaped iniquity (ver. 13). And, therefore,

(2) *The threat of divine chastisement.* Instead of sparing her fair neck any longer, Jehovah would "yoke Ephraim" (G. A. Smith); Judah would be compelled to plough, and Jacob to break his clods—"a figure for the depressing conditions of life under a foreign master" (Cheyne). Removed from the threshing floor altogether, Ephraim would be compelled to draw. And was there no possibility of respite, even at the eleventh hour? Yes.

(3) *The promise of divine forgiveness* (ver. 12). If Ephraim, determined to plough in some field, would only do so in the field of penitence, and sow the seed of righteousness, they would yet reap according to רָצוּן. The forgiving love of Jehovah would shower upon them "the fruits of righteousness" (γεννήματα δικαιοσύνης, LXX) —i.e., salvation; and they would walk in the light of the divine presence.

2. IT CONTINUES AN IMPERFECT IN THE SENSE OF A FREQUENTATIVE

It does so (a) in *past* time, as Gen. ii. 6, "A mist used to go up, *and water* the ground." Ex. xvii. 11, "*And it used to be* (וְהָיָה), when Moses held up his hand, *that Israel prevailed*" (וַיִּגְבֹּר). This use of vav perfect is very common in describing past events, conceived as customary, and in giving the details of a picture. Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 34-36), where David's early experiences with wild beasts is graphically depicted. וַיִּקֶּם is certainly frequentative, having all the force of a vigorous supposition—"whenever he arose (on any given occasion), I used to catch him by the beard and rend him." Or Gen. xxix. 2-3, in which a sudden change of tense, from the imperfect with וַיִּ to perfect with וַיְ, is most noticeable, and ought not to be neglected. "*And he looked* (vav imperfect), and behold a well in the field, and, lo, three flocks of sheep *were lying* (participle) by it; for out of that well they *used to water* (imperfect) the flocks. . . ." Then follow, in verse 3, four perfects with vav consecutive, showing that the whole verse belongs, not to the general narrative, but to the account

of what used to be done in the customary watering of the flocks. The general narrative is only resumed by the imperfect with וַי in verse 4.

It is found (β) in *present* time, as Amos v. 19, "As a man *flee*s from a lion, *and* a bear *meet*s him." Hos. vii. 7, "They are all hot as an oven, *and devour* (וַאֲכָלִי) their judges" (*i.e.*, habitually). Gen. ii. 24, "Therefore does a man leave his father and mother, *and cleave* to his wife, *and they are* one flesh." Or that solemn statement in Jer. xvii. 5-8, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, *and maketh* (וַשָּׂם) flesh his arm; for he shall be like the scrub of the desert: (but) blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, *and* whose hope the Lord *is* (וַהֲיָה); for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters." The entire paragraph (5-10) may be divided thus—(1) The continual practice or principle of the divine government that only piety can eventually prosper (5-8). (2) The self-deception of the human heart that will not accept the teaching of this principle (ver. 9). (3) The disillusionment, that at the end he shall behold his ill-gotten gains vanish, and he himself accounted as a fool (vers. 10-11).

Or the preacher may turn to a similar illus-

tration in Jer. xx. 9. “*And if I say* (vav perfect) I will not speak any more in his name, *then there is* (וְהָיָה) in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, *and I am weary* (וְנִלְאֵיתִי) with forbearing, and I cannot (contain).” This is a vast improvement upon the A.V., which seems to describe a *single* past occurrence—“Then I said, etc.” The latter would require וְאָמַר, and would convey no idea of the *repetition* so plainly discernible in the original. The fact is, that what is equivalent to a conditional sentence is frequently framed by vav consecutive perfect without any conditional particle at all; and it is so used both in the protasis and apodosis. The whole text ought to be read in the light of the context. Jeremiah, by his fearless words, first at Topheth (xix. 12) and then in the temple (ver. 14) had aroused the wrath of the priests and people to the highest pitch of violence. The chief agent in this persecution was Pashur, “the chief officer in the house of the Lord.” He had Jeremiah seized, scourged, and put in the stocks at one of the principal gates of the temple. There the prophet remained all that night until Pashur came to release him on the morrow. And what was the nature of his meditation, as he sat, a

persecuted martyr, in the upper gate of Benjamin? The answer is found in xx. 7-18. For, according to his usual method, Jeremiah has put his soliloquies and prayers at the close of the narrative with which they are connected. In reality they ought to come in before his triumphant reply to Pashur in the morning (vers. 3-6). So that, read in the light of such a context, verse 9 suggests a twofold division.

(1) *The temptation to be silent.* It had its origin in the persecution to which he was being subjected—the violence of the priests (ver. 2) and the ridicule of the people (7-8); and in proportion as he yielded to it, it produced, and only could produce, discouragement and dismay (*cf.* vers. 14-18).

(2) *The irresistible impulse to speak.* It was, as it were, a fire shut up in the bones, and he could not contain. The fire was the felt presence and power of the Eternal—a power “mighty and terrible” (ver. 11), and one that tried the reins and the heart (ver. 12); and in proportion as he yielded to it, he experienced the uplifting and enlargement of deliverance, until he was able to sing, “Praise ye the Lord; for *He hath delivered* (perfect of certitude) the soul of the needy” (ver. 13).

3. IT CONTINUES ANY OTHER VERBAL FORM
BELONGING TO THE SPHERE OF THE IM-
PERFECT

A participle—*e.g.*, as Ex. vii. 17, “Behold, I am about to smite (מִכֶּה) the waters, *and they shall be turned* into blood.” An infinitive, whether absolute (Isa. v. 5) or construct (2 Kings xviii. 32)—“*Until I come, and take you away*” (וְלִקְחֶתִּי). A jussive, as Gen. i. 14, “Let there be lights, *and let them be* for signs.” Or a cohortative, Gen xxxi. 44, “And now come, let us make a covenant; *and let it be* for a witness between me and thee.” But chiefly an *imperative*, 1 Kings ii. 31, “Fall upon him, *and bury him.*” Or Gen. vi. 14, “Make thee an ark, *and pitch it*” (וְבִפְרָתִי)—the throwing forward of the tone showing that the וְ is consecutive).

In connection with these verbal forms, the student may note two other passages, in which the precise point is somehow missed even in the rendering of the R.V. Gen. xlvii. 29-30. Here the ordinary division into verses has helped to obscure the patriarch's instructions. He does not say, “*But when I sleep* with my fathers, thou shalt carry me out of Egypt.” Beginning with

the last clause of verse 29, which is practically a negative imperative (אַל־נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי), the three subordinate verbs in verse 30, which are all perfects with vav consecutive, ought to be rendered with the same or a similar nuance. "Bury me not in Egypt, *but let me lie* with my fathers; yea, *carry me out* of Egypt, *and bury me* in their burying-place." Similarly in Ezek. xx. 20. The R.V. translates—"And hallow My Sabbaths; *and they shall be* a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God"—*i.e.*, a *promise* of divine blessing for the future. But the promise had already been given to the fathers, as in verse 12; and now their children in the wilderness were being appealed to, to allow the covenant promise to become a reality—"Hallow My Sabbaths; *and let them be* a sign between Me and you." Instead of pointing to the future, it was a call to divine co-operation in the present. For as in Israel's past, so now on the plains of Babylonia, the Sabbath was a greater boon than Israel imagined. It was at least three things in one.

- (1) A bond of union among themselves.
- (2) A badge of distinction from the heathen.¹
- (3) Jehovah's bow in the cloud, that the

¹ See the author's "Minor Prophets," p. 68.

deluge-like waters of exile would no more become a flood to overwhelm the nation.

4. IT MAY FOLLOW ANYTHING WHICH SUPPLIES THE GROUND OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT

The starting-point may be a simple *casus pendens*. Num. xiv. 31, "But your little ones . . . *I will bring* (וְהֵבִיאֲתִי) them in." 2 Sam. xiv. 10, "Whosoever saith aught unto thee, *bring him* (וְהֵבִיאֲתוֹ) to me." Or a *time designation*, as Hos. i. 4, "Yet a little while, *and I will visit* (וּפָקַדְתִּי)." Ex. xvi. 6, "At evening, *then ye shall know*." Or even a causal statement, after which the strong vav is used to introduce the apodosis. 1 Kings xx. 28, "Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is a god of the hills . . . *therefore will I deliver* all this great multitude into thine hand." Isa. iii. 16-17, "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty . . . *therefore the Lord will smite*, etc." Cf. also Isa. vi. 7, where we have the ground or condition of the prophet's forgiveness—"Lo, this hath touched thy lips ; *and so thy iniquity passeth away* (וְיָסַר), and thy sin is atoned for" (G. A. Smith). It is not necessary

to render "*shall* pass away" with Davidson and Driver. "The ׀ connects as simultaneous what is said by נָגַע and כָּר" (Delitzsch). And if anything is clear exegetically, it is the coinciding of the prophet's forgiveness with the application of the sacramental sign. The moment he rises from that act of sacramental communion, he exclaims in the full consciousness of a divine absolution, "Here am I, send me." This allusion to a sacrament may furnish the best solution of the seraph's reassuring message. A sacrament is something more than a momentary act. It is an act that symbolises the passing into a forgiven and lifelong state—a state that is best described by God's eternal *now*; not "*shall be*," but "*is*." Hence, to paraphrase his language, it might read, "Lo, this glowing stone *touches* thy mouth, and, as you kneel in silent receptivity under the mystic sign, I, as heaven's delegate, pronounce the words *Absolvo Te*—Thine iniquity *passeth away*, and thy sin *is expiated*." So that the forgiveness depicted in Isaiah's vision may be treated as follows:—

- (1) *Its divine origin*—a glowing stone "from the altar."
- (2) *Its completed character*—"Thine iniquity is taken away" (R.V.).

- (3) *Its adaptability to the individual man—*
 “Lo, this hath touched *thy lips*.”

Of course, if the vav be disjoined from the verb, as in the last clause of this verse, we must write **וְחָטְאָתָהּ תִּכְפֹּר** instead of vav perfect. The subject is thereby rendered more emphatic, and the change to the simple imperfect has the additional advantage of variety. There are even cases where the imperfect is used alone—the strong vav not being present at all. Cf. Zeph. i. 8 with verse 12, where in addition to an adverbial clause we have the preceding phrase **וְהָיָה**. “And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord’s sacrifice *that I will punish* (**וּפָקַדְתִּי**) the princes, etc.” “And it shall come to pass at that time *that I will search* (**אֶחְפֹּשׂ**) Jerusalem with candles.” The latter text, on Israel’s sin and punishment, is full of interest to the preacher; and we may close the present chapter by indicating a possible line of exposition.

(1) *The Sin*.—It was at once an absorbing devotion to secular business (ver. 11), religious indifference or being “settled on their lees,” and unbelief or virtual infidelity—“that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.”

(2) *The Punishment*.—Jehovah had come first with the lamp of reason and conscience (*cf.* Prov. xx. 27); then with the lamp of mercy (*cf.* Rev. iii. 20); and only when both of these had been rejected, had He drawn near with the lamp of judgment, to punish the men who were settled on their lees.

(3) And yet it need not be. Zephaniah was a *preacher of salvation*, no less than of judgment (*cf.* iii. 14-20)—a truth which is beautifully symbolised by his name, “he whom Jehovah has hid.” “The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save : He will rejoice over thee with joy ; *He will be silent in His love* ” (R.V. margin). We bow in adoration before the revelation of so profound an affection, and *are hid* under the shadow of the Almighty.¹

¹ *Cf.* the author's “Minor Prophets,” p. 58 ; also, “Sermons in Accents,” p. 117.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PERFECT AND IMPERFECT WITH WEAK VAV

IN dealing with the rudiments of Hebrew grammar, the student has no doubt noted various peculiarities that help to indicate date. We have the varying use of the vowel letters—אָהוּי. They were used very sparingly at first, as תּוֹמָם, with omitted Aleph and Yod (Gen. xxv. 24), or מִצָּתִי, with omitted Aleph (Num. xi. 11); precisely as we find רֶשׁ for ראשׁ on the Moabite Stone, or קָל for קוֹל in the Siloam Inscription. In later Hebrew, however, when the Aramean began to intrude upon the Palestinian speech, writers such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel find it necessary to give the *scriptio plena*; though even in this case the question of date is somewhat complicated by the fact that in the earlier books the instances of defective writing have been largely removed by the corrections of later copyists. תּוֹמָם is expanded into תּוֹמוֹמִים in Gen. xxxviii. 27, and מִצָּתִי becomes מִצָּאתִי in 1 Sam. xxix. 3, etc.

A more striking indication of date is found in the growing use of *the perfect with light vav*. In the continuation of a historical narrative the usual idiom is the imperfect with vav consecutive, as וַאֲמַר, "Then said I" (Gen. xxiv. 39); yet even in the earliest writings, there are occasional traces of this second idiom coming to take its place, as Judges xvi. 18, 2 Sam. xvi. 5, etc.; until, in the later books, and particularly in Ecclesiastes, the imperfect with ו gradually disappears, whereas the other construction, which becomes universal in Aramaic and in the Mishnah, occurs with ever-increasing frequency as וַאֲמַרְתִּי, "Then said I" (Eccles. ix. 16). The feeling of connection in some of these later instances is so strong that our translators have quite commonly rendered it *so*, *then* (Eccles. ii. 9, etc.), just as in the more regular idiom of vav consecutive with the imperfect. Not that the two constructions are thereby conceived as identical. They are rather two circles drawn from two adjacent but quite distinct centres. Logical secution is the centre of the one; parallelism or co-ordination the centre of the other; and while they intersect and overlap and cover a considerable area common to both, the original conception that is peculiar to each ought not to be overlooked.

In the present instance we may distinguish three separate nuances in the perfect with light vav.

1. CO-ORDINATION

This is in keeping with Canon Driver's main distinction that as compared with the imperfect with $\cdot\text{ל}$, the perfect with light vav causes the narrative to advance, not by development, but by *accretion*. The writer wishes to set two facts in co-ordination with one another. He would regard the second, not as consequential or successive to the first, but simply as simultaneous or in some way parallel with it. Hence the light vav, with which the connection is formed, is copulative rather than consecutive, and ought to be recognised and interpreted as such. Cf. Isa. i. 2, "I have nourished, *and brought up* children." Deut. ii. 30, "The Lord thy God hardened his spirit, *and made* his heart obstinate." Or Ps. xxxviii. 9, "I am faint *and sore bruised*" (וְנִדְּבִיתִי). This differs little from the asyndetous construction, as in verse 7, "I am pained *and bowed down greatly*" (שְׁחֹתִי). Or Lam. ii. 16, "We have found, we have seen it."

For a practical illustration, suggested by this idiom of co-ordination, the preacher may turn

to Isa. lxiii. 10, "But they rebelled, *and grieved* (וְהִקְמָה מְרוֹי וְעִצְרוֹ) his holy spirit : therefore he was turned (imperfect with וְ) to be their enemy, and himself fought against them." The A.V. begins a new paragraph here ; but the verse is in strict logical sequence with verses 7-9—the opening formula (וְהִקְמָה מְרוֹי) being an exact equivalent for vav consecutive with the imperfect. The revisers, too, have printed the term "spirit," with a small s, instead of the authorised capital letter ; for in the Old Testament the designation "spirit" is invariably used in connection with Jehovah, and is never employed absolutely, like a distinct personality who may enter into communion with man. And yet even in the R.V. is the insertion of a comma justified after the term "rebelled?" The pronoun "they" is emphatic ; and in order to preserve this emphasis, the Masoretes have not only marked it with a disjunctive accent, but have also connected the two verbs, which are really simultaneous or parallel with one another, with a conjunctive accent. Logical sequence is only resumed in the next clause by the use of the imperfect with וְ. So that to bring out this connection, and to preserve this emphatic punctuation, we ought rather

to read—"He bear them, and carried them all the days of old. But *as for them*, they rebelled and grieved his holy spirit, etc." Read in the light of this context, the verse may be taken as the key to the whole paragraph, which may be divided thus:—

- (a) *The divine love*—manifold, compassionate, and age-long (vers. 7-9).
- (β) *The divine grief*—not at affliction (ver. 9) but at *sin* (ver. 10^a).
- (γ) *The divine chastisement*—turned to be their enemy, but the enmity was simply the obverse side of the love (vers. 10^b, 11^a).

2. CONTRAST

Instead of simple co-ordination the perfect with light vav may indicate a strong adversative sense, expressed by *but*, *whereas*, etc. 1 Kings iii. 11, "Thou hast not asked long life . . . *but hast asked*, etc." (וְשָׁאַלְתָּ). 2 Kings xviii. 36, "*But* (in reply to Rabshakeh) the people *held their peace* (וְהִחָרִישׁוּ), and answered him not a word." Jer. iv. 10, "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! surely Thou hast greatly deceived this people, saying, Ye shall have peace; *whereas* the sword *reacheth*

(וְנִנְעָה) unto the soul." Or for a practical illustration, Prov. ix. 12 :—

If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself ;

But if thou scornest (לִצְחָה), thou alone shalt bear it.

Why the revisers should have preferred the copulative "and" instead of the adversative "but" of the A.V. we cannot profess to explain. Not only is there an emphatic contrast between the two halves of the verse, but the verse itself is the summary of one of the most striking contrasts in the whole Book of Proverbs. It matters not whether it be taken as the conclusion of the paragraph on *Wisdom* (as in the English version) or the beginning of the section on *Folly* (as in the Masoretic text);¹ it belongs in reality to both, and with its simple antithetical parallelism, may be accepted as a suitable summary of the whole. And what is its theme? The bearing of wisdom or of folly on the man's own life—

"If thou art wise, thou art wise *for thyself* ;

But if thou scornest, *thou alone* shalt bear it."

It may be admitted, with the LXX, that if a

¹ For in the Tiberian school of Masoretes, verse 12, began one of the *Sedarim* or triennial sections, into which the whole Bible was divided, so as to admit of its being read in the synagogue once in three years (Ginsburg's "Introduction," p. 32).

man be wise for himself, he shall be wise also to his neighbours (*καὶ τοῖς πλησίον*); just as wisdom too will be supremely satisfied when she has admonished the man into love (ver. 8); but that is not the main thought in the present passage. It is the influence of well-doing or of ill-doing upon the individual himself—the growing in honour or the reaping of the whirlwind in the man's own life. And if the preacher follow the interesting addition of the LXX, he will experience no lack of suggestive imagery to illustrate his sermon. It may be paraphrased as follows:—
“My son, if thou be wise for thyself, thou shalt also be wise to thy neighbours: but if thou turn out evil, and so estrange thy fellows—massacring the crew, so to speak—thou shalt find thyself alone on a stormy sea, and be compelled to bale out the water unaided (*μόνος ἀν ἀντλήσεις κακά*). Yea, thou shalt be like a man who tries to shepherd the winds (*οὗτος ποιμαίνει ἀνέμους*), or to keep pace with the flight of birds at the time of their migration: they can only lead you away from the immediate duties of field and vineyard, until wandering in desert places, you will find neither water nor fruit.” Truly, if one be wise, he is wise *for himself*!

On the other hand, is this a suitable message for the present generation? It is. Altruism has

been preached so long that the indispensable duty of self-discipline is apt to be neglected. And yet where will all our altruistic dreams end, if the individual equipment and character be allowed to run to seed? The call of humanity is not to be ignored, but the teaching of the Hebrew sage, as of our own dramatist, must be constantly repeated :—

This above all,—to thine own self be true ;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

3. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

As already indicated in Chap. XII., logical sequence is not to be sought in every instance of *vav* consecutive with the *imperfect*. Having become a common formula for the connecting of past events, the idiom came to be used for all kinds of sequence—whether of mere chronological succession or of mental association—without any idea of regarding each new detail as the necessary consequence or result of the preceding act. It is in this wider use of *vav* imperfect that we are to seek an analogy to the *perfect* with light *vav*. In many instances, especially in the later stages of the language, the two constructions are used indiscriminately to indicate, in simple narrative, the evolution of the thought. Indeed, the perfect

with light vav is the natural formula for such an expression; and while the imperfect with וַ was adopted as the more classical Hebrew idiom, there is nothing anomalous or enigmatical in the fact that occasionally in the earlier books, and increasingly in the later, we find this simple historical connection denoted by vav copulative.

Gen. xv. 6, "*And he believed* (וַיֵּאֱמֵן) in the Lord; and he counted (imperfect with וַ) it to him for righteousness." The second verb is rightly conceived as consequential to the first; but there is nothing to show that the verse itself is part of a consecutive narrative. It is rather thrown in as a mental reflection on the part of the writer; and is therefore naturally introduced by the perfect with weak vav. As a connected narrative, verses 5, 7 read well enough without it. Cf. also 1 Kings xx. 21, "*And the king of Israel went out, and smote* (וַיִּדֹּ) the horses and chariots, *and slew* (וַיַּהַרֵּג) the Syrians with a great slaughter." Here the first verb "to smite" is rightly viewed as in true logical secution to "went out"; but since the second half of the verse is as clearly parallel or simultaneous with the first half, it is as fittingly introduced by vav copulative.

Or the preacher may turn to Isa. xxii. 14,

“*And the Lord of hosts revealed Himself (וַיִּגְלֶה) in mine ears, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die.*” The text is not really consecutive to verses 12-13. It is simply one of the *parallel* truths which the prophet had firmly and clearly realised in the valley of vision. These truths are at least four in number:—

(1) That Sennacherib’s army now advancing on Jerusalem (701) was Jehovah’s instrument (ver. 11^b).

(2) That repentance, even at the eleventh hour, was Jerusalem’s one way of escape (ver. 12). Indeed, when Hezekiah did repent, as recorded in xxxvii. 1, deliverance was at once granted (ver. 36).

(3) Instead of this, the prophet saw the entire city given over to infatuated frivolity (ver. 13). They were looking to Egypt for help, and trusting in the multitude of their sacrifices; and thinking that it was all well behind these safeguards, they were turning the hour of crisis into a holiday.

(4) Therefore doom was inevitable (ver. 14). “This iniquity shall not be purged from you *till ye die.*” They had sinned the sin that hath never forgiveness; and now the weeping prophet (ver. 4), like the weeping Saviour (Matt. xxiii. 37), could only say, “Your house is left unto you

desolate." True, the doom did not immediately fall; and yet still less was it withdrawn. "It remains hovering over Jerusalem like an eagle, and in the end, sure enough, Jerusalem becomes its carrion" (Delitzsch).

4. THE IMPERFECT WITH LIGHT VAV

If the perfect with simple vav, as in the foregoing paragraphs, is occasionally used in place of the imperfect with *וַ*, we find something entirely analogous in the corresponding idiom of vav consecutive with the perfect. Its place is frequently taken by the imperfect with light vav. Instead of the ordinary secution, Gen. i. 14, "Let there be lights, *and let them be* (וַיְהִי) for signs," we have in all periods of the language the equally natural construction of the simple imperfect, verse 9, "Let the waters be gathered together . . . *and let the dry land appear* (וַיִּתְרָאֶה)." Probably this use of the imperfect, which is more frequent in the poetical than in the historical books, was preferred to the more usual secution with the perfect as giving greater force and independence to the verbal action. Ps. xxv. 9:—

The meek will he guide in judgment ;

And the meek will he teach (וַיִּלְמַד) his way.

Or Gen. ix. 27 (poetical):—

God enlarge (not, "shall enlarge") Japheth,
And let him dwell (וַיֵּשְׁבֶן) in the tents of Shem.

The asyndetous construction is only slightly more vivid in its terseness and animation. Cf. Hos. v. 14, 15, "I, even I, will tear *and go away*" (אֶמְרֶה וְאֵלֵךְ). "I will go, *and return* to my place" (אֵלֵךְ אֲשׁוּבָה).

The main distinction, however, between the two constructions—between simple vav and vav consecutive—is just the fact already adduced, that in the case of vav copulative, the element of sequence is allowed more and more to recede into the background. It tends to become simple co-ordination. Cf. Gen. xvii. 1-2, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect. *And I will make* (וְאֶתְּנָה) My covenant between Me and thee." Verse 2 is not consecutive to verse 1, in the sense that the framing of a covenant is made dependent on the perfect allegiance of the man. The spring of the divine action is found in El Shaddai Himself: and since both the allegiance and the covenant are traced back, like *parallel* streams, to His revealed will and character ("I am God Almighty"), the connection between them is suitably represented by the insertion of vav copulative. "Walk

before me, and be thou perfect," is therefore a divine injunction that looks in both directions—back to the character of El Shaddai, and forward to the fulness of the covenant. Nevertheless, it is not the covenant that is contingent on the obedience; it is the obedience that is stimulated by the covenant. Hence a suitable line of thought would be:—

- (1) The injunction to walk with God.
- (2) Its twofold ground, in the assured character and covenant of Jehovah.

Or for a concluding illustration, we may turn to Ps. xxxvii. 40, which, as Perowne observes, contains "the whole lesson of the Psalm:"—

And the Lord helpeth them, and rescueth them :
He rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them,
Because they have taken refuge in Him.

The first line of this verse is really consecutive to verse 39, and is therefore rightly introduced by the imperfect with $\cdot\dot{\text{v}}$. The second line, however, forms with the first a good instance of *parallelismus membrorum*, and consequently is as suitably introduced by simple vav. Hence, if the former passage supplied a twofold reason for human obedience, the present furnishes a twofold ground for the divine deliverance. Jehovah saves the children of men because—

- (1) He is a fortress in the time of trouble
(ver. 39).
- (2) Because, like the hunted manslayer, they
themselves have fled for refuge to the
shelter of the divine Shepherd's tent.

In view of what *He is*, and of what *they are*, He rescues them from the fell sweep of the avenger, because they have taken refuge in Him.¹ It is enough! "Even the youths shall faint *and be weary* (imperfect with simple vav), and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

¹ Cf. The author's "Mosaic Tabernacle," p. 23.

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